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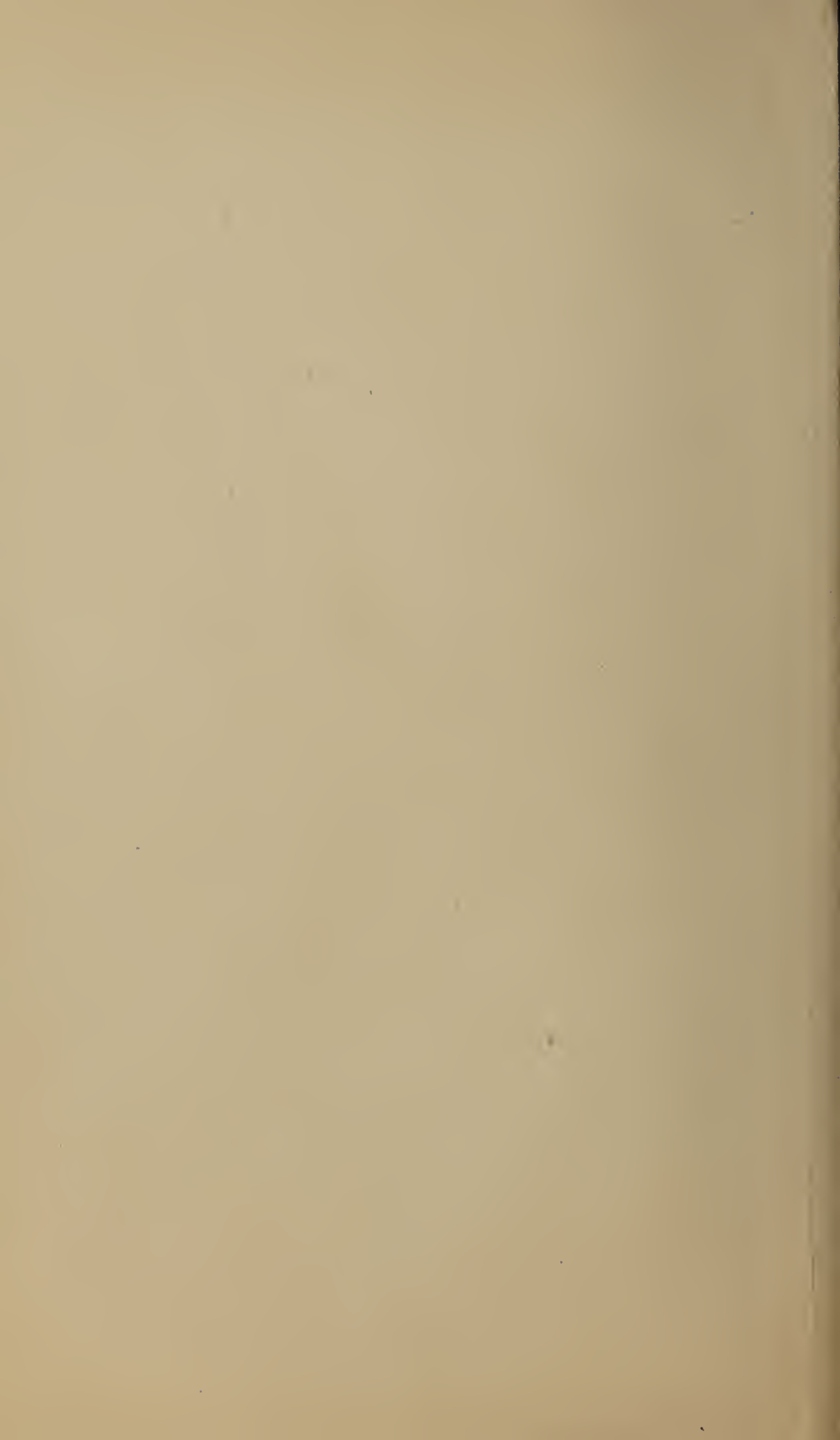
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THE THREE GREATEST
PRAYERS



THE THREE GREATEST PRAYERS

*Commentaries on the Our Father, the
Hail Mary and the Apostles' Creed*

by
ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

Translated by
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With an Introduction by
THOMAS GILBY, O.P.

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INTRODUCTION

THE Conferences here translated were preached in the evening to the students and townsfolk of Naples during the Lent of 1273.¹ It is probable that they were given in the local dialect and were reported in Latin by Reginald of Piperno.

St. Thomas died on the following 7th of March, at Fossanova near by, on his way north to attend the 14th Œcumenical Council at Lyons. On hearing of his death, the University of Paris on the 2nd of May wrote a letter of condolence to the General Chapter of the Dominicans which was held at Lyons that Whitsuntide, adding a request for copies of the Master's writings completed since his departure from Paris two years before. The Chapter commissioned Reginald of Piperno, who had been the secretary and companion of St. Thomas since 1259, to draw up an authentic list. The original manuscripts had been left to the Priory of St. Dominic at Naples, though the exemplars of some earlier works, notably the *Summa Theologica* and the *Contra Gentes*, were at Paris. Reginald, however, possessed all the writings of the saint.

The catalogue he made is the original and official one.² It ends with a list of works ascribed to St. Thomas, not written or edited by him, but reported from his lecturing and preaching, either by Reginald himself or by his colleague, Peter d'Andria. These include the Conferences on the *Our Father* and on the Apostles' Creed (*Collationes*³ *De Pater Noster, et Credo in Deum*).

The Conferences on the *Hail Mary* do not appear in the list, yet a copy was sent to the University with the others,

¹ Cf. P. Mandonnet, O.P., *Le Carême de saint Thomas d'Aquin à Naples. S. Tommaso d'Aquino : Miscellanea storico-artistico*, Rome, 1924.

² Cf. P. Mandonnet, O.P., *Les 'Opuscules' de saint Thomas d'Aquin*, Paris, 1927.

³ MS. *collectiones*.

and the work appears in a later catalogue, of which there is an early fourteenth-century (possibly late thirteenth-century) manuscript in the Library of Saint-Geneviève at Paris and another at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. De Rubeis¹ calls it a little commentary, *commentariolus*, and refutes those who would attribute it either to the Augustinian Henry de Wrimaria or to Pope Innocent III. Some doubt as to its authenticity was felt owing also to a misunderstanding of St. Thomas's position with regard to the Immaculate Conception, for it is, in the words of Ptolemy of Lucca, a treatise to the effect that the Blessed Virgin surpassed the angels in fullness of glory and grace. It was even alleged that on this account the text was tampered with in the printed Antwerp edition of 1612. Yet it stands with the other works in the last of the classical catalogues made by Bernard Guidonis for the canonisation of St. Thomas in 1323,² and there is solid ground for supposing that it truly reports the words of St. Thomas to his fellow-countrymen.

THOMAS GILBY, O.P.

¹ *De Gestis et Scriptis ac Doctrina S. Thomae Aquinatis. Diss. VIII, cc. i & ii*, Venice, 1750.

² Cf. P. Mandonnet, O.P., *Des écrits authentiques de saint Thomas d'Aquin*, Fribourg, 1910.

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THE THREE GREATEST PRAYERS

COMMENTARY ON THE LORD'S PRAYER

Cf. *Sum. Th.*, II-II, Q. lxxxiii, art. 9.

AMONG all prayers the Lord's Prayer stands pre-eminent, for it excels in the five conditions requisite in prayer: namely, assurance, rectitude, order, devotion and humility. We should pray with assurance, so as to go *with confidence to the throne of grace* (Heb. iv, 16): and with fulness of faith: *Let him ask in faith nothing wavering* (Jas. i, 6). Now there can be no doubt that this prayer affords the greatest security, since it was framed by our Advocate and most wise Petitioner in whom are *all the treasures of wisdom* (Col. ii, 3) and of whom it is said (1 John ii, 1): *We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the just*. Hence Cyprian says (*De Orat. Dom.*): *Seeing that we have Christ as an advocate with the Father for our sins, we should employ the words of our advocate when we seek forgiveness of our sins*. Moreover, the security of this prayer is rendered the more apparent from the fact that He who with the Father hears our prayer did Himself teach us how to pray, according to Psalm xc, 15: *He shall cry to me and I will hear him*; wherefore Cyprian says (*ibid.*) that to *plead with our Lord in his own words betokens the prayer of an intimate and devoted friend*. Consequently this prayer is never fruitless, seeing that according to Augustine (*Enchir.*, lxxviii)¹ venial sins are forgiven by means thereof.

A second condition of prayer is that we must pray aright,

¹ *Sum. Th.*, I-II, Q. lxxiv, art. 8, ad 6.

and ask God for that which is good for us. For Damascene says (*De Fide Orth.*, iii) that *to pray is to ask becoming things of God*; thus it often happens that our prayers are not granted because we ask for that which is not good for us: *You ask and receive not, because you ask amiss* (Jas. iv, 3). Now it is no easy matter to know what we should pray for, since it is most difficult to know what we ought to desire: for if it is right to pray for a certain thing, it must be right to desire it. For this reason the Apostle says (Rom. viii, 26) that *we know not what we should pray for as we ought*. Now Christ is our teacher, wherefore it belongs to Him to teach us what we ought to pray for: thus His disciples said to Him: *Lord, teach us to pray* (Luke xi, 1). It follows that then do we pray most rightly when we ask for what He taught us to pray for. Hence Augustine says (*Ep. cxxx, ad Probam*): *If we would pray rightly and fittingly, we shall say nothing else but what is contained in this prayer of our Lord*.

Again, prayer should be orderly even as desire, in as much as it is the expression of desire. Now the right order of prayer is that our desires and prayers should prefer spiritual to carnal goods, and heavenly to earthly things: *Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you* (Matt. vi, 33). Now our Lord teaches us to observe this order in this prayer wherein we pray first for heavenly and afterwards for earthly blessings.

Again, prayer should be devout, because the unction of devotion makes the sacrifice of prayer to be acceptable to God: *In thy name I will lift up my hands; let my soul be filled as with marrow and fatness* (Ps. lxii, 5, 6). Yet it often happens that devotion cools through prayer being over long: wherefore our Lord warned us against praying at unnecessary length: *When you are praying, speak not much* (Matt. vi, 7): and Augustine says to Proba (l.c.): *Beware of praying with many words: it is fervent attention that secures a hearing*. Hence the brevity of the Lord's Prayer. Now devotion arises from charity which is the love of God and of our neighbour: and both of these are indicated in this prayer. In order to express our love of God we call Him *Father*, and in order to indicate love of our neighbour we pray for all in general: *Our Father . . . Forgive us our trespasses*: since it is through love of our neighbour that we make this petition.

Lastly, prayer should be humble: *He hath had regard to the prayer of the humble* (Ps. ci, 18). The same is to be gathered from the story of the pharisee and the publican (Luke xviii, 14), and is expressed in the words of Judith (ix, 16): *The prayer of the humble and the meek hath always pleased thee*. This same humility is observed in this prayer in as much as true humility consists in not presuming on our own strength, but in trusting to obtain all things from the power of God.

It must also be observed that prayer procures a threefold good. In the first place it is an efficacious and useful remedy against all manner of evils. Hence it delivers a man from sins already committed: *Thou hast forgiven the wickedness of my sin: for this shall every godly man pray to thee* (Ps. xxxi, 5, 6). Thus prayed the thief on his cross, and obtained pardon: *This day shalt thou be with me in paradise* (Luke xxiii, 43). Thus also prayed the publican, and *went down to his house justified* (ibid., xviii, 14). It also frees man from the fear of future sin; and from trials and despondency: *Is any one of you in trouble? Let him pray* (Jas. v, 13). Again, it delivers him from persecutors and enemies: *Instead of making me a return for my love they decried me; but I gave myself to prayer* (Ps. cviii, 4).—Secondly, prayer is efficacious and useful for obtaining whatsoever we desire: *All things whatsoever ye ask, when ye pray, believe that you shall receive* (Mark xi, 24): and if our prayer be not granted, it is either because it lacks constancy, in that *we should pray always and never faint* (Luke xviii, 1), or because we ask for what is less conducive to our salvation: thus Augustine says: *The Lord, of his bounty, often grants not what we seek, so as to bestow something preferable*. We have an example of this in Paul who thrice besought the removal of the sting in his flesh, and yet was he not heard (2 Cor. xii, 8, 9).—Thirdly, prayer is profitable in as much as it makes us the familiars of God: *Let my prayer be directed as incense in thy sight* (Ps. cxl, 2).

OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN

Accordingly He begins thus: *Our Father . . .* Observe two things here: in what sense He is our *Father*, and what we owe Him in that He is our Father. (1) We call Him Father by reason of His having created us in a special manner, viz. to His own image and likeness, which He did not impress on

other creatures here below : *He is thy Father who made thee, and created thee* (Deut. xxxii, 6) :—also by reason of His governing us : for although He governs all things, yet does He govern us as masters of ourselves, whereas He governs other things as slaves of His will : *Thy providence, O Father, governs all things* (Wisd. xiv, 3) : *Thou disposest of us with great favour* (ibid., xii, 18) :—again by reason of His having adopted us : since other creatures He has endowed with trifling gifts, whereas to us He has granted the inheritance ; in as much as we are His sons, *and if sons, heirs also*, as the Apostle says (Rom. viii, 15) : *You have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear ; but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons whereby we cry : Abba (Father).*

(2) Our debt to Him is fourfold. Firstly, we owe Him honour : *If I am Father, where is my honour ?* (Mal. i, 6). This honour consists in three things. (a) In reference to God, by giving Him praise : *The sacrifice of praise shall honour me* (Ps. xlix, 23). Moreover, this praise should be not only on our lips, but also in our heart : *This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me* (Isa. xxix, 13). (b) In reference to himself man should honour God by purity of body : *Glorify and bear God in your body* (1 Cor. vi, 20). (c) In reference to our neighbour, by judging him justly : *The king's honour loveth judgement* (Ps. xcvi, 3).

Secondly, we owe Him imitation, seeing that He is our Father : *Thou shalt call me Father, and shalt not cease to walk after me* (Jer. iii, 19). This is done in three ways. (a) By loving Him : *Be ye imitators of God as most dear children and walk in love* (Eph. v, 1) : and this must needs be in the heart. (b) By being merciful, because mercy is bound to accompany love : *Be ye merciful* (Luke vi, 36) : and this must needs be in deed. (c) By being perfect, since love and mercy should be perfect : *Be ye perfect as also your heavenly Father is perfect* (Matt. v, 48).

Thirdly, we owe Him obedience : *Shall we not much more obey the Father of spirits ?* (Heb. xii, 9) : and this on three counts : (a) By reason of His dominion, for He is the Lord : *All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient* (Exod. xxiv, 7). (b) By reason of His example : because His true Son was made obedient to the Father unto death (Phil. ii, 8). (c) Because it is good for us to obey : *I will play before the Lord who hath chosen me* (2 Kings vi, 21).

Fourthly, we owe Him patience under His chastening : *My son, reject not the correction of the Lord ; and do not faint when thou art chastised by him ; for whom the Lord loveth he chastiseth ; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth* (Prov. iii, 11, 12).

Our. Hence we are given to understand that we owe our neighbour two things. (a) Love, since he is our brother, seeing that we are God's children : *He that loveth not his brother whom he seeth, how can he love God whom he seeth not ?* (1 John iv, 20). (b) Reverence, because he is a child of God : *Have we not all one father ? Hath not one God created us ? Why then doth every one of us despise his brother ?* (Mal. ii, 10). *With honour preventing one another* (Rom. xii, 10). And this for the sake of the fruit, since God Himself *became to all that obey him the cause of eternal salvation* (Heb. v, 9).

Who art in heaven. Of all the things required of us when we pray confidence is of great avail : *Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering* (Jas. i, 6). For this reason our Lord in teaching us how to pray promises those things which engender confidence in us. Such is the loving kindness of a father, implied in the words, *Our Father*. Thus He says (Luke xi, 13) : *If ye being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the good Spirit to them that ask him ?* Such also is the greatness of His power : wherefore He says, *Who art in heaven*. Thus it is written (Ps. cxxii, 1) : *Unto thee have I lifted up mine eyes, who dwelleth in the heavens*.

These words may be taken to refer to three things. (a) As a preparation of the man who prays : *Before prayer prepare thy soul* (Ecclus. xviii, 23), so that *in heaven* signifies 'in heavenly glory' : *Your reward is very great in heaven* (Matt. v, 12). This preparation should consist—in imitating heavenly things, for a son should imitate his father : hence it is said (1 Cor. xv, 49) : *As we have borne the image of the earthly, let us bear the image of the heavenly* :—in the contemplation of heavenly things, in as much as a man is wont to turn his thoughts more often towards where his father is, and where those things are that he loves : *Wheresoever thy treasure is there also is thy heart* (Matt. vi, 21) : thus the Apostle says (Phil. iii, 20) : *Our conversation is in heaven* :—and in the search for heavenly things, so that from Him who is in heaven we seek nothing but what is

heavenly : *Seek the things that are above where Christ is* (Col. iii, 1).

(b) Secondly, the words *Who art in heaven* may be taken to indicate the handiness of the hearer, in as much as He is nigh to us. Thus *in cælis*¹ would mean *in the saints* in whom God dwells according to Jer. xiv, 9 : *Thou, O Lord, art in us*. For the saints are called *the heavens* according to Ps. xviii, 2 : *The heavens declare the glory of God*. Now God dwells in the saints—by faith : *That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith* (Eph. iii, 17)—by love : *He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him* (1 John iv, 16)—and by the fulfilment of His commandments : *If any man love me, he will keep my word ; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him* (John xiv, 23).

(c) Thirdly, the words *Who art in heaven* may be taken as referring to the power of the hearer : so that *the heavens* would signify the heavenly bodies ; not that God is confined within corporeal heavens, in as much as *The heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee* (3 Kings viii, 27), but so as to indicate that God is all-seeing in His survey of things in that He views them from on high : *He hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary* (Ps. ci, 20)—and that He surpasses all things in His might : *The Lord hath prepared his throne in heaven* (Ps. cii, 19) : and that He dwells in an unchangeable eternity : *Thou endurest for ever*,² *and thy years shall not fail* (Ps. ci, 25, 27). Hence it is said of Christ (Ps. lxxxviii, 30) : *I will make his throne as the days of heaven*. Thus the Philosopher says (*De Cælo*, i) that on account of the heavens being incorruptible all are agreed in assigning heaven as the abode of spirits.

Accordingly the words *Who art in heaven* inspire us with confidence in praying, in three respects : (a) as regards the power of Him whom we pray : (b) as bringing us into familiar intercourse with Him ; (c) and as being in keeping with the nature of our petitions.

(a) The power of Him whom we pray is implied if by *heaven* we understand the corporeal heavens : and although He is not confined within corporeal space, seeing that it is said : *I fill heaven and earth* (Jer. xxiii, 24), yet is He said to be in the

¹ Literally, *in the heavens*.

² *For ever* is not in the Vulgate here : St. Thomas has in his mind Lam. v, 19.

corporeal heavens in order to indicate two things : to wit, the extent of His power, and the sublimity of His nature. The former is against those who assert that all happenings are the necessary result of fate as dependent on the heavenly bodies ; according to which opinion it were useless to seek to obtain anything by praying to God. But this is foolish in as much as God is said to be in heaven in the sense that He is the Lord of the heavens and of the stars, according to Ps. cii, 19 : *The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens.*—The latter is against those who in praying suppose and fancy God to exist under certain corporeal images : and thus God is stated to be in heaven, so as to indicate His supereminence by means of that which is highest among sensible things, seeing that He surpasses all things even man's desire and understanding ; hence it is impossible to think or desire anything but what is less than God. Thus it is said (Job xxxvi, 26) : *Behold God is great, exceeding our knowledge ;* and (Ps. cxii, 4) : *The Lord is high above all nations ;* and (Isa. xl, 18) : *To whom have ye likened God ?*

(b) Familiar intercourse with God is indicated if we take *the heavens* to signify the saints. Because seeing that on account of His exalted nature some have asserted that He cared not for human affairs,¹ we need to bear in mind that He is nigh unto us, nay, within us, since He is said to be in the heavens, i.e. in the saints who are called the heavens : *The heavens declare the glory of God* (Ps. xviii, 2) : *Thou art in us, O Lord* (Jer. xiv, 9). Now for two reasons this brings confidence to those who pray. First, on account of God's nearness : *The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him* (Ps. cxliv, 18). Hence it is said (Matt. vi, 6) : *But thou when thou prayest enter into thy chamber, i.e. into thy heart.* The second reason is that we are able by the patronage of the saints to obtain what we ask for : *Turn to some of the saints* (Job v, 1) : *Pray for one another that ye may be saved* (Jas. v, 16).

(c) The usefulness and fittingness of prayer are indicated by the words *in heaven* if by *the heavens* are understood spiritual and eternal goods wherein beatitude consists : and this for two reasons. Firstly, because thereby it increases our desire for heavenly things ; inasmuch as our desire must needs tend towards where our Father dwells, since it is there

¹ Job xxii, 14.

that is our inheritance : *Seek the things that are above* (Col. iii, 1). *Unto an inheritance incorruptible . . . reserved in heaven for you* (1 Pet. i, 4). Secondly, because prayer gives life a spiritual form and conforms us to our heavenly Father : *Such as is the heavenly, such also are they that are heavenly* (1 Cor. xv, 48). These two, heavenly desire and heavenly life, equip a man for prayer and enable him to pray becomingly.

FIRST PETITION

HALLOWED BE THY NAME

In this first petition we ask that His name be manifested and heralded in us. Now God's name is, in the first place, wonderful, because in all creatures it works wonders : thus our Lord said (Mark xvi, 17, 18) : *In my name they shall cast out devils, they shall speak strange tongues, they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them.*—Secondly, it is lovable : *There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved* (Acts iv, 12) : and we should all desire to be saved. We have an example in the Blessed Ignatius to whom Christ's name was so dear, that when Trajan ordered him to deny it, he answered that it could not be dragged from his mouth ; and when the emperor threatened to have him beheaded, so as to take Christ's name out of his mouth, he replied : ' Even though you take it from my mouth you will never take it from my heart ; for it is imprinted on my heart, and therefore I cannot cease to invoke it.' Hearing this and wishing to put it to the test, Trajan, after the servant of God had been beheaded, commanded his heart to be taken out, where it was found to be inscribed with Christ's name in ' letters of gold ' : for he had engraved this name ' as a seal on his heart.'—Thirdly, it is venerable ; thus the Apostle says (Phil. ii, 10) : *At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, on earth and under the earth* ; of those that are in heaven, in reference to the angels and the blessed ; of those that are on earth, in reference to the inhabitants of the earth, who do so for love of the heaven which they desire to obtain ; and of those who are under the earth, as regards the damned who do so out of fear.—Fourthly, it is ineffable in as much as no tongue can describe

it : for which reason sometimes it is explained with reference to creatures. Thus it is compared to a rock by reason of its stability : *On this rock I will build my church* (Matt. xvi, 18).¹—To fire, by reason of its power to cleanse : since just as fire cleanses denser metals, so does God purify the hearts of sinners : *Thy God is a consuming fire* (Deut. iv, 24).—To light, by reason of its enlightenment : for just as light banishes darkness, even so the name of God banishes darkness from the mind : *My God, enlighten thou my darkness* (Ps. xvii, 29).

We pray then that this name be made manifest, that it may be known and hallowed. Now the Latin word *sanctum* admits of a threefold explanation. Firstly, it is the same as *firm*,² wherefore all the blessed in heaven are called saints, because they are firmly established in eternal bliss ; whereas none is a ' saint ' on earth, where all are continually changeable : *I sank away from thee, and I wandered too much astray from thee, my stay* (Augustine, *Conf.* ii, 10.).—Secondly, *sanctum* may be rendered *unearthly*³ ; hence the saints in heaven have no earthly affections : thus the Apostle says (Phil. iii, 8) : *I count all things but as dung, that I may gain Christ*. The earth signifies sinners :—(a) as regards production : since if the earth be not cultivated it brings forth thorns and thistles ; and in like manner the sinner's soul, unless it be cultivated by grace, brings forth nothing but the thistles and pricks of sins : *Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee* (Gen. iii, 18) ;—(b) as regards darkness : since the earth is dark and opaque ; and so also is the sinner dark and opaque : *Darkness was on the face of the abyss* (Gen. i, 2) ;—(c) as regards a condition attaching to it : in that being a dry element, it will not cohere without moisture to bind it together : for God placed the earth above the waters : *Who established the earth above the waters* (Ps. cxxxv, 6) : because the moisture of the waters holds together the arid and dry earth. Even so the sinner's soul is arid and devoid of humour : *My soul is as earth without water unto thee* (Ps. cxlii, 6).—Thirdly, *sanctum* may be rendered *sanguine tinctum* (washed in blood) : wherefore the saints in heaven are so called because they have been washed in blood : *These are they who came out of great tribulation and have washed*

¹ And the rock was Christ (1 Cor. x, 4).

² Latin, *sancitum*.

³ Referring to the derivation of the Greek ἀγίος.

their robes . . . in the blood of the lamb (Apoc. vii, 14) : and (ibid., i, 5) : *He hath washed us from our sins in his blood.*

SECOND PETITION

THY KINGDOM COME

As already stated, the Holy Ghost makes us love, desire and ask aright ; and begins by causing in us fear whereby we ask that God's name be hallowed. Another gift is that of piety. Now piety, properly speaking, is a disposition of kindness and devotion towards one's father, and towards all those who are in distress. Since then God is our Father, as we have made evident, it follows that not only ought we to reverence and fear Him, but also to have a sweet and devout disposition towards Him ; which makes us ask that His kingdom may come : *We should live righteously and piously in this present world, looking for the blessed hope and manifestation of the glory of the present God* (Titus ii, 12).

It may be asked : The kingdom of God always was : why then ask that it may come ? In reply be it observed that this may be understood in three ways.

(1) Sometimes a king has only the right to a kingdom or throne, but as yet has not been proclaimed king, through the inhabitants not being as yet subjected to him. Wherefore his kingdom or throne will come when those men shall be subject to him. Now, God by His very essence and nature is Lord of all : and Christ not only as God, but as man by reason of His Godhead, is Lord of all : *He gave him power, and honour, and a kingdom* (Dan. vii, 14). Consequently all things ought to be subject to Him. However, they are not subject as yet, but will be at the end of the world : *He must reign till he hath put all his enemies under his feet* (1 Cor. xv, 25). For this we pray when we say : *Thy kingdom come*, and this for a threefold purpose : the safe-guarding of the just, the punishment of the wicked, and the destruction of death. The reason is that man is subject to Christ in two ways, either willingly or unwillingly : because, seeing that God's will is so efficacious that it must needs be fulfilled outright, and since God wills all things to be subject to Christ, one of the two is necessary, either that men do the

will of God by submitting to His commandments, as the just do, or else God wreaks His will on men by punishing them, as He will do on sinners and on His enemies, at the end of the world: *Until I make thy enemies thy footstool* (Ps. cix, 1). Hence the saints are enjoined to ask that God's kingdom may come; namely, that they may be wholly subject to Him: whereas to sinners it is repellent, since for them to ask that God's kingdom may come is nothing less than to pray that by God's will they may be condemned to punishment: *Woe to them that desire the day of the Lord* (Amos v, 18). The result of this is the destruction of death: because since Christ is life, in His kingdom there can be no death which is contrary to life: hence it is said (1 Cor. xv, 26): *Last of all the enemy death shall be destroyed*. This will be fulfilled at the resurrection: *He will transform the body of our lowliness, that it may be made like to the body of his glory* (Phil. iii, 21).

(2) Secondly, the kingdom of heaven signifies the glory of paradise. This is easily understood, since *regnum* (kingdom) is only another word for *regimen* (government): while the best government is where nothing is done against the will of the governor. Now God's will is the salvation of mankind, since He wills men to be saved: and this will be realised most especially in paradise where there will be nothing contrary to man's salvation: *They shall gather out of his kingdom all scandals* (Matt. xiii, 41): whereas in this world there are many things contrary to the salvation of mankind. When, therefore, we pray, *Thy kingdom come*, we ask to be made partakers of the heavenly kingdom and of the glory of paradise.

Moreover, this kingdom is most desirable for three reasons: Firstly, on account of the supreme righteousness that obtains there: *Thy people shall be all righteous* (Isa. lx, 21): in that here below the wicked are mingled with the good: whereas in heaven there are no wicked and no sinners. Secondly, on account of the most perfect liberty: in that here is no liberty, however much all desire it naturally: while in heaven there is perfect liberty without any trace of bondage: *The creature itself will be delivered from corruption* (Rom. viii, 21). In fact, not only will all be free, but all will be kings: *Thou hast made us unto our*

God a kingdom (Apoc. v, 10): in as much as all shall be of one will with God, and whatsoever shall be the saints' will, will be God's will, and the saints' will, whatsoever will be God's will: and therefore their will will be done with God's will; and thus all will reign, since the will of all will be done, and God will be the crown of all: *In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory and for a diadem of beauty unto the residue of his people* (Isa. xxviii, 5). Thirdly, on account of its wondrous wealth: *The eye hath not seen, O God, beside thee, what things thou hast prepared for them that wait on thee* (Isa. lxiv, 4). *Who satisfieth thy desire with good things* (Ps. cii, 5).

And take note that whatsoever man seeks in this world, he will find it more perfect and more excellent in God alone.¹ If thou seekest delight, thou wilt find supreme delight in God: seekest thou wealth?; thou wilt find in Him all things in abundance, for which thou wouldst fain be wealthy; and so on. *When the soul strays from thee she seeks things apart from thee, but finds all things impure and unprofitable until she returns to thee* (Augustine, *Conf.*, ii, 6).

(3) The third reason for this petition is that sometimes sin reigns in this world: and this is when a man is so disposed that he follows at once the lure of sin and carries it into effect: *Let not sin reign in your mortal body* (Rom. vi, 12). But let God reign in thy heart: (That saith to) *Zion; Thy God shall reign* (Isa. lii, 7): and this will be when thou art ready to obey God and keep all His commandments. When therefore we ask that His kingdom may come, we pray that God and not sin may reign in us.

Accordingly, by this petition we shall obtain that beatitude of which it is said (Matt. v, 4): *Blessed are the meek*.¹ Thus according to the first explanation, from the moment that a man desires God to be the Lord of all, he ceases to seek revenge for the injury done to himself, but leaves that to God: since if thou wert to avenge thyself, thou wouldst no longer seek the advent of His kingdom. According to the second explanation, if thou await the coming of His kingdom, i.e. the glory of paradise, thou hast no need to regret the loss of earthly goods. And according to the third,

¹ *Sum. Th.*, I-II, Q. lxix, art. 3, ad 3; II-II, Q. lxxxix, art. 9, ad 3; Q. cxxi, art. 2.

if thou ask that God reign in thee, Christ also will reign in thee who was most meek: and thou wilt be meek in consequence: *Learn of me, for I am meek* (Matt. xi, 29): *Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods* (Heb. x, 34).

THIRD PETITION

THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

The third gift bestowed on us by the Holy Ghost is the gift of knowledge: for He bestows on the righteous not only the gift of fear and the gift of piety which is a filial affection towards God, as already stated, but He also gives them wisdom. It is for this that David prayed (Ps. cxviii, 66): *Teach me goodness, discipline and knowledge*; by which knowledge the Holy Ghost teaches us how to lead a good life. Now of all the signs of a man's knowledge and wisdom, none is proof of greater wisdom than that a man does not cling to his own opinion: *Lean not upon thine own prudence* (Prov. iii, 5). Because those who cling to their own judgement so as to mistrust others and trust in themselves alone, invariably prove themselves fools and are adjudged as such: *Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him* (Prov. xxvi, 12). Whereas if a man distrusts his own judgement, this is a proof of his humility: wherefore it is said (ibid., xi, 2): *Where humility is there also is wisdom*; whereas the proud are too self-confident. Accordingly, we learn from the Holy Ghost by His gift of knowledge to do, not our own, but God's will, and by virtue of this gift we pray God that His will be done on earth as it is in heaven. It is in this that the gift of knowledge is proved: so that when we say to God, *Thy will be done*, it is as when a sick man consults a physician: for he takes the medicine not precisely because he wills it himself, but because it is the will of the physician: else if he only took what he willed himself, he would be a fool. Hence we should ask nothing of God save that His will be done in our regard; in other words that His will be fulfilled in us: since then is man's heart right when it agrees with the divine will. Thus did Christ: *I came down from heaven to do, not my own will, but the will of him that sent me* (John

vi, 38). For Christ, as God, has the same will with the Father : but as man He has a distinct will from the Father's : and in respect of this will He says that He does not His own but His Father's will. Wherefore He taught us to pray, and ask : *Thy will be done.*

But how can this be explained in face of the words of Ps. cxiii, 3 : *He hath done whatsoever he hath willed?* If He has done whatsoever He pleased in heaven and on earth, what does He mean when He makes us say : *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven?*

This is explained by observing that God wills three things in our regard, which we pray to be fulfilled. The first thing that God wills for us is that we may have eternal life : because whosoever makes a certain thing for a certain end wills that end for that thing. Now God made man, but not without a purpose : for as the Psalm (lxxxviii, 48) says : *Hast thou made all the children of men in vain?* Therefore He made man for a certain end : but not for the sake of material pleasures, since dumb animals have them, but that he may have eternal life : wherefore it is the Lord's will that man have eternal life. When a thing attains the end for which it was made it is said to be saved ; whereas when it fails to reach that end it is said to be lost. Now God made man for eternal life ; and consequently, when he obtains eternal life, he is saved : which is God's will : *This is the will of my Father who sent me, that whosoever beholdeth the Son and believeth in him, have eternal life* (John vi, 40). This will is already fulfilled in the angels and in the saints that are in heaven, who see, know and enjoy God ; while we desire that as God's will is fulfilled in the blessed who are in heaven, even so may it be fulfilled in us who are on earth. This, then, is the sense of our prayer, *Thy will be done*, namely, that it be done in us who are on earth, even as it is fulfilled in the saints who are in heaven.

Secondly, God's will in our regard is that we keep His commandments ; because when we desire a particular thing, we will not only what we desire, but also whatsoever enables us to obtain it : thus a physician in order to restore a man to health, wills also his diet, his medicine and so on. Now God wills us to obtain eternal life : *If thou wouldst enter life, keep the commandments* (Matt. xix, 17). Therefore He wills us to keep the commandments : *Your reasonable service . . .*

so that ye find out what is the good and the well-pleasing and the perfect will of God (Rom. xii, 1, 2)—*good*, since it is profitable: *Who teach thee to profit* (Isa. xlviii, 17)—*well-pleasing* to them that love it, and though displeasing to others, yet delightful to those who love His will: *Light is risen for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart* (Ps. xcvi, 11)—*perfect*, because it enjoins virtue: *Be ye perfect as also your heavenly Father is perfect* (Matt. v, 48). Accordingly, when we say, *Thy will be done*, we pray that we may keep God's commandments; and this will of God is fulfilled in the righteous, but is not yet fulfilled in sinners. Now the righteous are signified by *heaven*, and the sinner by the *earth*. Hence we pray that God's will be done on *earth*, i.e. in sinners, even as it is done in *heaven*, i.e. in the righteous. We must observe here that we have something to learn from the very manner of expression. For He does not say, *Do*, or yet, *Let us do*, but, *Thy will be done*. The reason is that two things are requisite in order to obtain eternal life: the grace of God and man's will; and although God made man without the help of man, He does not sanctify him without his co-operation: *He who created thee without thyself, will not justify thee without thyself*, as Augustine says, commenting on John xiv, 12 (*Super Verb. Ap.*, serm. xv), because He wishes man to co-operate: *Turn ye unto me and I will turn unto you* (Zach. i, 3): *By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace in me hath not been void* (1 Cor. xv, 10). Presume not therefore on thyself, but trust in the grace of God; nor be thou neglectful, but do thy utmost. Hence He says not: *Let us do*, lest He seem to imply that God's grace counts for nothing: nor does He say, *Do*, lest He seem to state that man's will and effort are of no account; but, *Be it done*—by God's grace, with solicitude and effort on our part.

The third thing that God wills in our regard is that man be restored to the state and dignity wherein the first man was created, which was so great that his spirit and soul experienced no rebellion on the part of the flesh and sensitive appetite. Because as long as the soul was subject to God, the flesh was so subject to the spirit that it felt no corruption whether of death, or of sickness, or of other passions: but from the moment that the spirit and soul that stood between God and the flesh rebelled against God by sin, there and then the body

rebelled against the soul, and began to be aware of death and infirmity as well as of the ceaseless rebellion of the sensitive appetite against the spirit: *I behold another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind* (Rom. vii, 23). *The flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh* (Gal. v, 17). Thus there is continual war between flesh and spirit, and man is ever being worsened by sin. Hence it is God's will that man be restored to his pristine state, namely, that the flesh be wholly delivered from all that rebels against the spirit: *This is the will of God, your sanctification* (1 Thess. iv, 3). But this will of God cannot be fulfilled in this life, whereas it will be fulfilled at the resurrection of the saints, when bodies will arise in glory and incorruption, and in a state of great perfection: *It is sown in dishonour, it shall rise in glory* (1 Cor. xv, 43). In the righteous, however, God's will is fulfilled as to the spirit by their righteousness, knowledge and life: and therefore when we say, *Thy will be done*, we pray that this may be fulfilled also in the flesh. In this way we take *heaven* to signify the spirit, and *earth* to indicate the flesh, so that the sense is, *Thy will be done on earth*, i.e. in our flesh, *as it is done in heaven*, i.e. in our spirit, by righteousness.

By this petition we reach the beatitude of mourning, of which it is said: *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted* (Matt. v, 5). This applies to each of the three explanations given above. According to the first we desire eternal life: wherefore the delay causes us to mourn: *Woe is me that my sojourn is prolonged* (Ps. cxix, 5). In fact this longing of the saints is so eager that through it they desire death which in itself is repellent: *We have the courage even to prefer to be exiled from the body and to be at home with the Lord* (2 Cor. v, 8).—According to the second explanation, they who keep the commandments are in mourning, since however sweet the commandments are to the soul, they are bitter to the flesh, which is continually buffeted: *going they went and wept, in the flesh, but coming they shall come with joy* in the soul (Ps. cxxv, 6).—According to the third explanation, sorrow results from the continual conflict between the flesh and the spirit: since it is impossible for the soul not to be wounded at least by venial sins due to the flesh, wherefore until it be healed it mourns: *Every*

night, i.e. in the darkness of sin, *I will wash my bed*, i.e. my conscience (Ps. vi, 7). And they who weep thus reach their heavenly country, whereto may God bring us all.

FOURTH PETITION

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD

It often happens that one who is gifted with great knowledge and wisdom is for that very reason disheartened and therefore needs fortitude to hearten him lest he lack necessities: *It is he that giveth strength to the weary, and increaseth force and might to them that are not* (Isa. xl, 29). It is the Holy Ghost who gives this fortitude: *The Spirit entered into me . . . and he set me upon my feet* (Ezech. ii, 2): and this gift of fortitude prevents man's heart from fainting through fear of lacking necessities, and makes him trust without wavering that God will provide him with whatsoever he needs. Wherefore the Holy Ghost the giver of this fortitude teaches us to pray God to *give us this day our daily bread*, for which reason He is called the *Spirit of fortitude*.¹

Observe here that in the three foregoing petitions we ask for spiritual blessings that are begun in this life here below, but are not perfected except in eternal life. Thus when we pray that God's name be hallowed, we ask that God's holiness be made known: when we pray that His kingdom may come, we ask that we be made partakers of eternal life: and when we pray that His will be done, we ask that His will be fulfilled in us. Now though all these petitions begin to be fulfilled here below, they cannot be realised perfectly except in eternal life: and consequently, we need to pray for certain necessary things which can be had perfectly in the present life, and for this reason the Holy Ghost has taught us to ask for the needs of this present life, which needs it is possible to be supplied perfectly here below: indicating at the same time that it is God who provides us with temporal goods. This is signified in the words, *Give us this day our daily bread*.

In these words the Holy Ghost teaches us to avoid the

¹ Isa. xi, 2.

five sins which are wont to arise from the desire for temporal goods. The first is that unbridled greed whereby a man seeks for the things which are above his station and condition of life through being dissatisfied with those which are in keeping therewith : for instance, if he be a common soldier, that he wants to dress not as a soldier but as a nobleman ; if he be an ordinary clergyman, that he wishes to clothe himself not as a clerk but as a bishop. This vice draws a man away from spiritual goods, in as much as it makes him have an overwhelming desire for temporalities : and our Lord taught us to shun this vice, by praying for bread only, namely, the needs of the present life, each one according to his own station : which needs are all expressed under the name of bread. Hence He did not teach us to ask for dainty things, or for many kinds of things, or for uncommon things, but for bread without which man cannot live, since it is the common need of all : *The chief thing for man's life is water and bread* (Ecclus. xxix, 27). *Having food and clothing, with these we shall be content* (1 Tim. vi, 8). The second vice consists in molesting and defrauding others in the acquisition of temporal goods : and is all the more fraught with danger as it is difficult to restore ill-gotten goods : because according to Augustine,¹ *unless a man restore what he has purloined, his sin is not forgiven*. Accordingly, we are taught here to shun this vice, by asking for our own and not another's bread : for robbers eat not their own bread but another's. The third vice is excessive solicitude. Some there are who are never satisfied with what they have, and always want more : this is lacking in moderation, since desire should always be measured according to one's needs : *Give me neither beggary nor riches, give me but the necessities of life* (Prov. xxx, 8). We are warned to avoid this, in the words, *Our daily bread*, that is to say, *the bread for one day or for one season*. The fourth vice is immoderate voraciousness ; whereby some would fain devour in one day what would suffice for several days : These seek bread not for to-day but for ten days, and through being over lavish they waste their all : *The drunkard and the glutton shall come to beggary* (Prov. xxiii, 21). *A workman that is a drunkard shall not be rich* (Ecclus. xix, 1). The fifth vice is ingratitude : for it is a great evil when a

¹ *Ep. ad Macedon*, cxliii.

man prides himself on his wealth, and fails to acknowledge that he owes all to God : since whatsoever we have, be it spiritual or temporal, comes from God : *All things are thine, and of thine own have we given thee* (1 Par. xxix, 14). Hence, in order to remove this vice, He says : *Give us even our daily bread*, to remind us that all we have comes from God.

From this we learn a lesson ; inasmuch as sometimes a man though having much wealth derives no benefit therefrom, but incurs loss both spiritual and temporal : for some have perished through riches : *There is also another grievous evil which I have seen under the sun, and that is common among men ; a man to whom God hath given riches, wealth and honour, so that his soul wanteth nothing at all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it up* (Eccles. vi, 1, 2) ; and, *Riches gathered together to the hurt of the owner* (ibid., v, 12). Wherefore we ought to pray that we may derive benefit from our wealth ; and this we pray for when we say, *give us our bread*, i.e. make our wealth profitable to us : *His bread in his belly shall be turned into the gall of asps within him. The riches which he hath swallowed he shall vomit them up ; God shall draw them out of his belly* (Job xx, 14, 15).

Another vice is concerned with worldly possessions : to wit, excessive solicitude about them. For there are some who are worried from day to day about temporal matters as much as a year in advance ; and those who are thus solicitous are never at rest : *Be not solicitous, saying : 'What shall we eat ?' or, 'what shall we drink ?' or, 'what are we to put on ?'* (Matt. vi, 31). Hence our Lord teaches us to ask that our bread be given us *to-day*, namely, whatsoever we need for the present.

Moreover, we may apply this to another twofold bread, the Sacramental Bread and the Bread of God's word. Accordingly we ask for our Sacramental Bread which is prepared for us every day in the Church, praying that as we receive it sacramentally, so may it profit us unto salvation : *I am the living bread which came down from heaven* (John vi, 51). *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh judgement to himself* (1 Cor. xi, 29). Again this bread means the word of God : *Not by bread alone doth man live but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God* (Matt. iv, 4). Hence we pray Him to give us bread, that is to say, His word. From this

there arises in man the beatitude of hunger after righteousness : inasmuch as the possession of spiritual goods increases our desire for them : which desire begets that hunger, the reward of which is the fulness of eternal life.

FIFTH PETITION

AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS

There are, indeed, some possessed of great wisdom and fortitude : yet through being over-confident in their own powers, their actions are not done wisely, nor do they succeed in accomplishing what they intend : *Purpose is strengthened by counsel* (Prov. xx, 18). We must observe, however, that the Holy Ghost who gives strength gives also counsel : because every good counsel in the matter of man's spiritual welfare comes from the Holy Ghost. Now, man needs counsel when he is in trouble, even as he needs to consult a physician when he is sick ; and, therefore, when his soul is sick through sin he must seek counsel in order to be healed : and that the sinner needs counsel is indicated in the words of Daniel (iv, 24) : *Let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, O King, and redeem thou thy sins with alms*. Hence, it is a very good counsel against sin that a man give alms and show mercy : and for this reason the Holy Ghost teaches sinners to make this petition and to pray : *Forgive us our debts*. We owe God that which we take from His right : and God's right is that we do His will in preference to our own. Hence we deprive God of His right when we prefer our own will to His : and this is sin. Therefore sins are our debts : and the Holy Ghost counsels us to ask forgiveness of our sins, and for this reason we say : *Forgive us our debts*.

In these words we may consider these points : (a) Why do we make this petition ? (b) When is it fulfilled ? (c) What is required of us that it may be fulfilled ?

(a) From this petition we gather two things that we need in this life.—One is that we be ever fearful and humble. For there have been some so presumptuous as to assert that it is possible for man by his own powers to live here below without committing sin : whereas this has been given to none save Christ, who had the Spirit without

measure, and the Blessed Virgin, who was full of grace and in whom there was no sin: *Of whom* (namely, the Virgin) Augustine¹ says, *in the matter of sin, it is my wish to exclude all mention whatsoever.* To no other saint has this been granted without their incurring at least venial sin: *If we say that we have not sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us* (1 John i, 8). This is confirmed by this petition, for we cannot doubt that it becomes even holy men to recite the *Our Father*, which includes the petition: *Forgive us our debts*; and, therefore, all acknowledge and confess themselves to be sinners or debtors. If, then, thou be a sinner, thou must be fearful and humble thyself.—The other thing is that we should ever live in hope: since, though we are sinners, we must not despair, lest despair lead us to various and greater sins. Thus the Apostle says (Eph. iv, 19): *Who despairing have given themselves over to licentiousness, unto the working of all uncleanness.* It is, therefore, most profitable for us to hope always, since however great a sinner a man may be, he should hope that God will forgive him, if he be thoroughly contrite and converted: and this hope is strengthened in us when we pray: *Forgive us our debts.*

The Novatians, however, destroyed this hope: for they said that those who sin once after being baptized never receive mercy. But this is not true, if Christ spoke the truth when He said (Matt. xviii, 32): *I forgave thee all the debt because thou besoughtest me.* Consequently whenever thou askest for mercy thou shalt receive it, provided that thou ask with repentance for thy sin.

Accordingly this petition gives rise to fear and hope: because every sinner who is contrite and confesses his sin receives mercy: and hence the need of this petition.

(b) As regards the second point, we must observe that in sin there are two things: namely, the fault whereby God is offended, and the punishment due to the fault. The fault, however, is remitted through contrition which includes the purpose of amendment and atonement: *I said: I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin* (Ps. xxxi, 5). Hence man must not despair, seeing that contrition together with the intention of confessing suffices for the forgiveness of sin.

¹ *De Nat. et Grat.*, xxxvi.

Possibly someone will object: If then sins are forgiven when a man is contrite, why does he need a priest?

I reply that in contrition God forgives the fault, while eternal punishment is commuted into temporal, the debt of temporal punishment remaining withal.¹ Hence were a man to die without confession—not because he refused it, but through being prevented—he would go to Purgatory, the punishment of which is very great, as Augustine says. Accordingly, when thou dost confess thy sin, the priest absolves thee from this punishment² by the power of the keys to which thou hast submitted in confession: and for this reason Christ said to His apostles (John xx, 22): *Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins ye shall forgive, they are forgiven them: and whose sins ye shall retain, they are retained.* Hence, if a man confesses once, some part of this punishment is remitted to him, and likewise when he confesses a second time: in fact, it may be that he confesses the sin so often that the whole punishment is remitted. Moreover, the successors of the Apostles devised another means for the remission of this punishment, to wit, the granting of indulgences³ which avail those who are in a state of grace, as much as is claimed for them, and as indicated by the grantor. That the Pope can do this is sufficiently clear. For many are the good deeds of holy men who, nevertheless, never sinned, at least mortally: which good deeds were done for the common good of the Church. Likewise the merits of Christ, and those of the Blessed Virgin are, as it were, the funded capital of the Church. Thus the sovereign pontiff and those whom he delegates for the purpose, can allocate these merits wherever the need occurs. Consequently sins are remitted not only by contrition as to their guilt, but also as to the punishment by confession and by their indulgences.

(c) As regards the third point, we must observe that on our part we must forgive our neighbour his offences against us: wherefore it is added, *As we forgive our debtors*; otherwise God would not forgive us: *Man to man reserveth anger: and doth he seek remedy of God?* (Ecclus. xxviii, 3). *Forgive and you shall be forgiven* (Luke vi, 37). For this reason this petition

¹ *Sum. Th. Suppl.*, Q. v, art. 2.

² See Editor's note, *Sum. Th. Suppl.*, Q. xviii, art. 1.

³ *Sum. Th. Suppl.*, Q. xxv.

alone is made conditional, by our saying, *As we forgive our debtors* ; for if thou forgivest not, thou wilt not be forgiven.

You might say : I will say the first part, *Forgive us . . .* but I will omit what follows, *As we forgive our debtors*. Do you then seek to deceive Christ ? Be sure that you do no such thing : since Christ who made this prayer remembers it well : and therefore He cannot be deceived. If, therefore, you say the words with your lips, fulfil them in your heart.

But someone may ask whether one who does not intend to forgive his neighbour, ought to say, *As we forgive our debtors*. Surely not, since his words would be a lie. I answer that he does not lie, for he prays not in his own person, but in that of the Church, who is not deceived : hence the petition is expressed in the plural.

Observe, however, that forgiveness is twofold. There is the forgiveness of those who are perfect : when he that is offended seeks out the offender : *Seek peace* (Ps. xxxiii, 15). The other forgiveness applies to all in general, namely that we forgive those who ask to be forgiven : *Forgive thy neighbour if he hath hurt thee, and then shall thy sins be forgiven thee when thou prayest* (Ecclus. xxviii, 2).

This leads us to another beatitude : *Blessed are the merciful* ; since mercifulness makes us show mercy to our neighbour.

SIXTH PETITION

AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION

Some, although they have sinned, desire the forgiveness of their sins : and for this reason they confess them and repent : and yet they do not strive as much as they ought in order that they may not fall into sin again. In this they are inconsistent, seeing that on the one hand they deplore their sins by repenting of them, while on the other hand by sinning again they have more and more sins to deplore. Thus we read (Isa. i, 16) : *Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean, take away the evil of your devices from before my eyes, cease to do evil*. Hence, as stated above, Christ in the foregoing petition taught us to ask forgiveness of our sins, while in this petition He teaches us to ask that we may be able to avoid

sin, that is to say, that we be not led into temptation and thus fall into sin : *And lead us not into temptation.*

Three questions arise here : (a) What is temptation ? (b) How and by whom is man tempted ? (c) How is he freed from temptation ?

(a) ¹ To tempt is nothing else but to try or prove : so that to tempt a man is to prove his virtue. Now a man's virtue is tried or proved in two ways, corresponding to two things required by a man's virtue. One regards doing well, in that it enables him to do good deeds : the other is that he avoid evil : *Depart from evil and do good* (Ps. xxxiii, 15). Accordingly a man's virtue is tried sometimes as regards his doing good, sometimes as regards his avoiding to do evil. With respect to the former, a man is tried in his readiness to do good deeds ; for instance, to fast and the like : because then is thy virtue great when thou art ready to do good. Thus does God sometimes tempt a man, not that a man's virtue is unknown to Him, but that all may know it, and take it as an example. In this way God tempted Abraham (Gen. xxii) and Job (Job i) : and it is thus that He often sends trials to the righteous, in order that by their patience in bearing them their virtue may be made manifest, and that they themselves may advance in virtue : *The Lord your God proveth you, that it may appear whether or not ye love him* (Deut. xiii, 3) : and thus God tempts man by inciting him to good deeds.

As to the second, a man's virtue is tried by inducing him to evil deeds : and if he offers strong resistance and does not consent, his virtue is great ; whereas if he yield to the temptation, he is devoid of virtue. In this way no man is tempted by God, for as it is said (Jas. i, 13) : *God cannot be tempted to evil things ; and himself tempteth no man.*

(b) But man is tempted by his own flesh, by the devil and by the world. He is tempted by the *flesh* in two ways. First, because the flesh instigates him to evil, inasmuch as it always seeks its own gratification, namely carnal pleasures in which sin often occurs ; for a man who indulges in carnal pleasures neglects spiritual things : *Everyone is tempted . . . by his own lust* (Jas. i, 14).—Secondly, the flesh tempts man by enticing him from good : because the spirit, for its own part,

¹ *Sum. Th.*, I, Q. cxiv, art. 2 ; II-II, Q. xcvi, art. 1.

would always delight in spiritual goods, but the flesh encumbers and hinders the spirit : *The corruptible body is a load upon the soul* (Wisd. ix, 15). *I delight in the law of God after the inward man, but I behold another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and making me a captive to the law of sin which is in my members* (Rom. vii, 22, 23). This temptation that comes from the flesh is most grievous in as much as our foe, namely, the flesh, is united to us, and as Boethius says : *No plague is more harmful than an enemy in the household* ; and, therefore, we must be on the watch against it : *Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation* (Matt. xxvi, 41)

The *devil* tempts with very great force : since even when the flesh is subdued, another tempter arises, namely, the devil, against whom we have a mighty struggle : hence the Apostle says (Eph. vi, 12) : *Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness* ; and for this reason he is called significantly the Tempter : *Lest haply the tempter hath tempted you* (1 Thess. iii, 5). In tempting he proceeds most cunningly. Thus like a skilful general when about to besiege a fortified city, he seeks out the weak points in the object of his assault, and tempts a man in those things wherein he sees him to be weak. Wherefore he tempts him in those sins to which after subduing his flesh man is most inclined, for instance, to anger, pride and other spiritual sins : *Your adversary the devil goeth about as a roaring lion seeking to devour* (1 Pet. v, 8). Moreover, in tempting a man the devil does two things. Thus he does not at once suggest to him something that has an appearance of evil, but something that has a semblance of good, so as thereby, at least in the beginning, to turn him from his chief purpose, while afterwards it becomes easier for him to induce him to sin, when he has turned him ever so little from that purpose : *Even Satan disguiseth himself as an angel of light* (2 Cor. xi, 13). Then having led him on to sin, he so enthrals him as to prevent him from arising out of sin : *The sinews of his testicles are wrapped together* (Job xl, 12). The devil then does two things : he both deceives a man, and after deceiving him enchains him in his sin.

The *world* tempts in two ways. First, by excessive and unbridled desire for temporal goods : wherefore the

Apostle says (1 Tim. vi, 10) that *the love of money is the root of all evils*.—Secondly, by the threats of persecutors and tyrants: *We are wrapped up in darkness* (Job xxxvii, 19). *All that would live piously in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution* (2 Tim. iii, 12). *Fear not those that slay the body* (Matt. x, 28).

(c) Accordingly it is now clear what temptation is: also in what way and by whom man is tempted. We have now to see how man is to be freed from temptation. Here we must observe that Christ teaches us to pray, not that we may not be tempted, but that we may not be led into temptation: because if man overcomes temptation he deserves a crown. Hence it is said (Jas. i, 2): *Deem it all delight my brethren, when ye fall into divers temptations*; and (Ecclus. ii, 1): *Son, when thou comest to the service of God . . . prepare thy soul for temptation*. Again (Jas. i, 12): *Blessed is the man that is patient under temptation: for when he hath been proved he shall receive the crown of life*. Hence He teaches us to pray that we be not led into temptation by consenting thereto: *Temptation hath not come upon you but such as man can bear* (1 Cor. x, 13): because to be tempted is human, but to consent is devilish.

But does God lead a man to evil, that we should say: *Lead us not into temptation*? I reply that God is said to lead us to evil by permitting us to do so, in as much as He withdraws His grace¹ from man by reason of his many sins, in consequence of which withdrawal man falls into sin. For this reason we chant (Ps. lxx, 9): *Forsake me not, O Lord, when my strength faileth*. Yet He guides man by the fervour of charity lest he be led into temptation: since the very least degree of charity is able to resist any sin whatsoever: *Many waters cannot quench charity* (Cant. viii, 7). He also guides us by the light of our intelligence whereby He teaches us what to do: because as the Philosopher says², *everyone who sins is ignorant*. Thus we read (Ps. xxxi, 8): *I will give thee understanding and will instruct thee*; and for this did David pray when he said (Ps. xii, 3, 4): *Enlighten mine eyes lest I sleep in death; lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him*. This is imparted to us in the gift of understanding. And since when we consent to temptation, we keep our hearts clean, of which it is said (Matt. v, 8): *Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see*

¹ Sum. Th., I-II, Q. lxx, art. 3.

² Ethics, iii, 1.

God : it follows that this petition brings us to the sight of God : to which may God lead us all.

SEVENTH PETITION

BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL. AMEN

In the foregoing petitions our Lord teaches us to seek forgiveness of our sins, and how we may be able to avoid temptations : and now He bids us pray to be safeguarded from evils. This is a general petition against all evils, to wit, sins, sickness and afflictions, as Augustine says. Seeing, however, that mention has been made of sin and temptation, it remains for other evils to be mentioned, namely, the trials and afflictions of this world, from which God delivers us in four ways.

First, by preventing their occurrence : but He does not do this often ; for the saints are afflicted in this world, since *everyone who would live piously in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution* (2 Tim. iii, 12). Yet sometimes God does prevent a man from being afflicted by an evil, when, to wit, He knows him to be unable to bear it : even as a physician does not apply violent remedies to a weak patient : *Behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it, for thou hast little strength* (Apoc. iii, 8). In heaven, however, this will apply to all, seeing that there none will be afflicted : *He shall deliver thee in six troubles*, those, namely, of the present life, which is divided into six stages, *and in the seventh evil shall not touch thee* (Job v, 19) : *They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more* (Apoc. vii, 16).

Secondly, He delivers us from afflictions when He comforts us in them : for unless He comfort us, we cannot hold out : *We were utterly weighed down beyond our strength* (2 Cor. i, 8) : *God who comforteth the humble, comforteth us* (ibid., vii, 6) : *According to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart thy comforts delight my soul* (Ps. xciii, 19).

Thirdly, because He bestows so many blessings on those who are afflicted that their evils are forgotten : *After the storm thou makest it calm* (Tob. iii, 22). Hence suchlike afflictions and trials are not to be feared, seeing that they are easy to bear both on account of the attendant consolations

and because of their short duration: *Our present light affliction ever more and more abundantly worketh out for us an eternal weight of glory* (2 Cor. iv, 17), because by means thereof we obtain eternal life.

Fourthly, inasmuch as temptations and trials are conducive to our profit: wherefore He does not say, *Deliver us from trials* but *from evil*, because trials bring the saints a crown, and for that reason they glory in their trials. Thus the Apostle says (Rom. v, 3): *And not only so, but we exult in our tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience. —In time of tribulation thou forgivest sins* (Tob. iii, 13). Thus God delivers man from evil and from trials by turning them to his profit: a sign of very great wisdom, in that it is a mark of wisdom to direct evil to a good purpose: and this is the result of patience in bearing trials. Other virtues indeed employ good things, but patience profits by evil things, for which reason it is necessary only in evils, i.e. in adversity: *The learning of a man is known by his patience* (Prov. xix, 11). Hence the Holy Ghost by means of the gift of wisdom makes us pray thus: so that we may obtain the beatitude which is the reward of peace: because by patience we obtain peace whether times be good or evil. Wherefore peacemakers are called the children of God in that they are like God, because even as nothing can hurt God, so neither can anything harm them, whether they prosper or suffer. Therefore *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God* (Matt. v, 9).

Amen. This is said to ratify all the petitions.

A SHORT EXPOSITION OF THE WHOLE PRAYER

By way of summing up what has been said, observe that the Lord's Prayer contains whatsoever things we ought to desire and whatsoever we ought to avoid.¹

Of all desirable things the first place belongs to that one which is most lovable. This is God: and therefore thou seekest first the glory of God by saying: *Hallowed be thy name.* There are three things that thou shouldst desire from God, and which concern thyself. The first is that thou

¹ *Sum. Th.*, II-II, Q. lxxxiii, art. 9.

mayest obtain eternal life ; and thou prayest for this by saying : *Thy kingdom come.* The second is that thou mayest fulfil God's will and His justice : for this thou askest by saying : *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.* The third is that thou mayest have the wherewithal to live : and for this thou prayest by saying : *Give us this day our daily bread.* Of these three our Lord says (Matt. vi, 33) : *Seek ye first the kingdom of God,* as regards the first ; *and his justice,* as regards the second ; *and all these things shall be added unto you,* as regards the third.

[The things to be avoided and fled from are those which are incompatible with the good. As stated above, the good to be first desired is fourfold. First there is the glory of God, which no evil can destroy : *If thou sin what shalt thou hurt him ? If thou be righteous what givest thou him ?* (Job xxxv, 6, 7)—because the evil whereby He punishes and the good with which He rewards redound to God's glory. The second good is eternal life, to which sin is contrary, because by sin eternal life is lost : and therefore to remove this evil we say : *Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.* The third good is righteousness and good works, to which temptations are opposed, in as much as they hinder us from performing them : and to remove this evil we pray : *Lead us not into temptation.* The fourth good is all those goods that we need, to which are opposed troubles and trials ; and to remove these we pray, *But deliver us from evil. Amen.*]

COMMENTARY ON THE ANGELIC SALUTATION, NAMELY, THE *HAIL MARY*!¹

HAIL MARY, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. This salutation is divided into three parts. (a) The first contains the words of the angel: *Hail full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou amongst women.* (b) The second part is composed of the words of Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist: *Blessed is the fruit of thy womb.* (c) The third part was added by the Church, namely, *Mary*: for the angel did not say, *Hail Mary*, but *Hail full of grace*; which name, according to its interpretation, is in keeping with the angel's words, as will be made plain.

(a) With regard to the first part, we must observe that of old it was no mean occurrence that angels appeared to men, or that men paid reverence to them: such thing being recorded as deserving of great praise. Hence it is mentioned in praise of Abraham that he gave hospitality to angels and paid them reverence. But it had never been heard that an angel should show reverence to a human being until one of them greeted reverently the Blessed Virgin, saying: *Hail*. That of old reverence was not shown by angels to men, but by men to angels, was because an angel was greater than a man, in three respects. Firstly, in point of dignity, in as much as an angel is of a spiritual nature: *Who maketh his angels spirits* (Ps. ciii, 4), whereas man is of a corruptible nature: for which reason Abraham said (Gen. xviii, 27): *I will speak to my Lord, whereas I am dust and ashes.* Hence it was not fitting that a spiritual and incorruptible creature should show reverence towards a corruptible

¹ At the time of St. Thomas the 'Hail Mary' consisted only of what is known as the first part, ending with the words, *The fruit of thy womb*. The addition of the Holy Name probably began about the time of St. Thomas. The second half was definitely added during the sixteenth century. Cf. *Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. *Hail Mary*.

one, namely, man.—Secondly, in point of his familiar association with God, being a member of God's household and standing by His throne: *Thousands of thousands ministered to him, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before him* (Dan. vii, 10); whereas man is like a stranger and far away from God on account of sin: *I have wandered afar off* (Ps. liv, 8). Wherefore it is fitting that man should revere an angel who is intimate and familiar with the King.—Thirdly, the angel is pre-eminent by reason of his fulness of the splendour of divine grace: in as much as he partakes of the divine light in the greatest plenitude: *Is there any number of his armies? and upon whom doth not his light arise?* (Job xxv, 3). For this reason angels always appear surrounded by light. On the other hand, although men partake somewhat of this same light of grace, their share is but small and not without some darkness. Hence it was not fitting that an angel should pay respect to a man until one should be found in human nature who would surpass the angels in these three ways; and such was the Blessed Virgin. Wherefore in order to show that she excelled him, the Angel was fain to show reverence to her by saying: *Hail*.

Accordingly the Blessed Virgin surpassed the angels in these three points. Firstly, in the fulness of grace, which is greater in her than in any angel: and to indicate this the Angel paid reverence to her by saying: *Full of grace*: as if to say: I bow to thee because thou dost surpass me in fulness of grace.

The Blessed Virgin is said to be full of grace¹ in three respects. Firstly, as regards her soul wherein there dwelt all the plenitude of grace. For God's grace is given for two purposes, namely, the performance of good deeds and the avoidance of evil. As regards both, the Blessed Virgin received grace in the most perfect degree: in as much as after Christ she was free from sin more than any other saint. For sin is either original—and from this she was cleansed in the womb—or mortal, or venial, from which she was free. Thus it is said (Cant. iv, 7): *Thou art all fair, O my love: and there is not a spot in thee*: and Augustine says (*De Nat. et Grat.*, xxxvi): *Except the holy Virgin Mary, if all*

¹ *Sum. Th.*, III, Q. xxvii, art. 5.

*the saints both men and women while living here below had been asked whether they were without sin, all would have cried aloud with one voice : ‘ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us ’—except, I repeat, this holy Virgin, about whom, for our Lord’s honour, I wish to exclude all mention whatsoever in the matter of sin. For we know that an abundance of grace was given her that she might be in every way the conqueror of sin, seeing that she conceived and brought forth Him who most certainly was guilty of no sin. But Christ surpassed the Blessed Virgin in that He was conceived and born without original sin : whereas the Blessed Virgin was conceived but not born in original sin.¹ Moreover, she practised the works of all the virtues, while other saints were conspicuous in certain particular virtues, one for humility, another for chastity, another for mercy ; for which reason each one is an example to us of some special virtue—thus, for instance, the Blessed Nicholas is an example of mercy—and so on. But the Blessed Virgin is an example of all virtues : thus thou findest in her a model of humility : *Behold the handmaid of the Lord* (Luke i, 38), and further on (verse 48) : *He hath regarded the humility of his handmaid* : of chastity : *Because I know not man* (ibid., 34) : and of all other virtues as can easily be shown. Therefore, the Blessed Virgin was full of grace both in performing good works and in avoiding evil deeds.—Secondly, she was full of grace as regards the overflow of grace from the soul into the flesh or body. For while it is a great thing in the saints to be so endowed with grace that their souls are holy, the soul of the Blessed Virgin was so full of grace that it overflowed into her flesh thus fitting it for the conception of God’s Son therefrom.² Thus Hugh of St. Victor says : *The Holy Ghost had so kindled in her heart the fire of divine love that it worked wonders in her flesh, yea, even so that she gave birth to God made man.—For the Holy One that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God* (Luke i, 35).—Thirdly, she was so full of grace that it overflows on to all mankind. It is, indeed, a great thing that any one saint has so much grace that it conduces to the salvation of many ; but most wondrous is it to have so much as to suffice for the salvation of all mankind : and thus*

¹ See Editor’s note at the end of the Commentary.

² *Sum. Th.*, III, Q. xxxi, arts. 4, 5.

is it in Christ and in the Blessed Virgin. Thus in every danger thou canst find a refuge in this same glorious Virgin : *A thousand bucklers* (i.e. protections from peril) *hang therefrom* (Cant. iv, 4).—Again, thou mayest obtain her assistance in every virtuous deed : *In me is all hope of life and of virtue* (Eccles. xxiv, 25). She is, therefore, full of grace, surpassing the angels in that plenitude : for which reason she is rightly called ‘Mary,’ which signifies ‘enlightened’—in herself : *The Lord will fill thy soul with brightness* (Isa. lviii, 11)—and enlightening others throughout the world below : wherefore she is compared to the sun and to the moon.

(b) She also surpasses the angels in her close association with God, and to indicate this the Angel said : *The Lord is with thee*, as if to say, ‘I bow to thee because thou art more familiar with God than I am, seeing that *the Lord is with thee*’—the Lord, quoth he, i.e. the Father whose Son is also thy Son, which cannot be said of any angel or of any creature whatever : *For the Holy One who shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God* (Luke i, 35).—The Lord God the Son was in her womb : *Rejoice and praise, O thou dwelling of Zion, for great is he that is in the midst of thee, the Holy One of Israel* (Isa. xii, 6). Wherefore the Lord is with the Blessed Virgin otherwise than with an angel : with her He is as her Son, with the angel as his Lord.—The Lord God the Holy Ghost was with her as in a temple : thus we say¹ : *Temple of the Lord, sanctuary of the Holy Ghost*, because she conceived of the Holy Ghost.² *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee* (Luke i, 35). Wherefore the Blessed Virgin is more intimately associated with God than an angel is, in as much as with her are the Lord the Father, the Lord the Son, and the Lord the Holy Ghost ; in a word, the whole Trinity : for which reason the words of the chant : *Throne wherein the three Divine Persons recline*.³ Hence no greater praise could be addressed to her than that which is contained in the words : *The Lord is with thee* : and she well deserved to be thus revered by the Angel, in that being the Mother of our Lord she is our Lady. Consequently, she is fittingly named ‘Mary,’ which in the Syrian tongue signifies ‘Lady.’

¹ Antiphon, *Beata Dei Genitrix* . . . from Little Office of our Lady.

² *Sum. Th.*, III, Q. xxxii.

³ *Totius Trinitatis nobile Triclinium*.

(c) Thirdly, she excels the angels in purity, because not only was she pure in herself, but obtains purity for others. In fact, she was most pure, being most immune both from sin—for she was free from both mortal and venial sin—and from punishment. Because a triple curse befell man on account of sin. The first fell on woman, namely, that she would conceive in corruption, bear with weariness, and bring forth in pain.¹ But the Blessed Virgin was immune from these, since she conceived without corruption, bore with ease, and with joy gave birth to our Saviour: *It shall bud forth and blossom and shall rejoice and praise* (Isa. xxxv, 2).—The second curse was pronounced on the man, namely, that he should *eat his bread in the sweat of his brow*. The Blessed Virgin was free from this, since as the Apostle says (1 Cor. vii, 34), a virgin is free from care for the things of this world and gives her mind to God alone.—The third curse fell upon both man and woman, to wit, that they would return to dust. From this also was the Blessed Virgin exempt, seeing that she was taken up bodily into Heaven: for we believe that after her death she was raised up and carried into Heaven: *Arise, O Lord, into thy rest: thou and the ark which thou didst sanctify* (Ps. cxxxi, 8). Accordingly she was free from every curse, and, therefore, *blessed among women*; in as much as she alone lifted the curse, brought us a blessing, and opened the gates of Heaven. Thus is the name ‘Mary’ befitting to her, for it signifies ‘Star of the sea’: since just as the star of the sea guides the sailor to port, so are Christ’s followers guided by Mary to heavenly glory.

Blessed is the fruit of thy womb. The sinner at times seeks but finds not, whereas the righteous seeks and finds: *The wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just* (Prov. xvi, 22). Thus did Eve seek the fruit, but found not therein all that she coveted: whereas the Blessed Virgin in her fruit found all that Eve had desired. Thus in her fruit Eve sought three things. First, that which the devil falsely promised, namely, that they would be like gods, knowing good and evil: *Ye shall be*, quoth the liar, *as gods* (Gen. iii, 5). Thus he lied, for *he is a liar, and the father thereof*. For through eating the fruit, Eve did not become

¹ *Sum. Th.*, II-II, Q. clxiv, art. 2.

like God, but unlike: in as much as by sinning she turned away from God her salvation, and was expelled from paradise. On the other hand the Blessed Virgin found this—and so also do all followers of Christ—in the fruit of her womb: since through Christ we are united and likened to God: *When he shall appear, we shall be like unto him, for we shall see him as he is* (1 John iii, 2).—Secondly, Eve in her fruit sought pleasure, in as much as it was *good to eat*; yet she found it not for at once she perceived that she was naked, and tasted sorrow. Whereas in the Fruit of the Blessed Virgin we find sweetness and salvation: *He that eateth my flesh . . . hath eternal life* (John vi, 55).—Thirdly, Eve's fruit was *fair to the eyes*; yet fairer far is the Virgin's Fruit: *on whom the angels long to gaze*.—*Thou art fairer than the sons of men* (Ps. xlv, 3)—and this is because He is the *brightness of the Father's glory*. Accordingly Eve could not find in her fruit that which no sinner can find in his sin: and therefore let us seek in the Virgin's Fruit that which we desire to have.

Moreover, this fruit is blessed by God, because God so filled Him with all grace that it overflows upon us who bow to Him in adoration: *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing on high in Christ* (Eph. i, 3). He is blessed by the angels: *Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might be to our God for ever and ever* (Apoc. vii, 12); and by men: *Let every tongue confess that our Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father* (Phil. ii, 11). *Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord* (Ps. cxvii, 26). Thus then is the Virgin blessed; but still more blessed is her Fruit.

ST. THOMAS AND THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

EDITORIAL NOTE¹

The privilege of the Virgin-Mother of God and the supreme prerogative of her Son may be seen from the following diagram:

¹ Reprinted from *Sum. Th.*, III, Q. xxvii, English translation.

THE LAW AND COURSE OF ORIGINAL SIN

Under the Law.	Partially exempt from the Law ; privilege of Immaculate Conception.	Wholly exempt from the Law ; Miraculous Conception.
All descendants from Adam.	The Blessed Virgin.	Our Blessed Lord.
Spring from Adam materially and seminally.		Springs from Adam materially, not seminally (Q. xxxi, art. 1).
The body lies (not under the guilt, but) under the effects of original sin.		His body lay under neither guilt nor effects of original sin.
The stricken body dispositively causes the soul to contract the guilt of original sin.	The stricken body would have dispositively caused the soul to contract the guilt of original sin.	The body being entirely free, could not transmit the stain to the soul.
The soul at the moment of union with the body contracts the stain.	The soul at the moment of union with the body was prevented by the infusion of grace from contracting the stain.	No preventive grace needed.
All contract both debt and stain.	Mary contracted the debt but not the stain.	Jesus Christ contracted neither debt nor stain.
All need a Redeemer to destroy the stain contracted.	Mary needed a Redeemer to prevent her from contracting the stain.	Jesus Christ is not redeemed, but the Redeemer.

It will thus be seen how accurately St. Thomas speaks of the *flesh* or body of our Blessed Lady. For it should be remembered that, according to St. Thomas, the human body is animated in succession by (1) a vegetative, (2) a sensitive, and (3) a rational soul. Hence his assertion that '*the flesh of the Blessed Virgin was conceived in original sin*' (Q. xiv, art. 8, ad 1) means that the *body* of the Blessed Virgin, being descended from Adam both materially and seminally, contracted the *bodily defects* which are conveyed by seminal generation, and are the results of the privation of original justice (Q. lxix, art. 4, ad 3). Before animation, by the rational soul, therefore, the body of the Blessed Virgin could not be infected with the guilt of original sin, because privation of grace can only be in that which is the subject of grace—viz. the rational soul. Nevertheless, before such animation the body of the Blessed Virgin, being seminally descended from Adam, was such that it would have been the means of transmitting the taint of original sin to the rational soul at the very instant of animation, by the rational soul, unless the grace of the Redeemer intervened and sanctified her soul *in that selfsame instant*, thus redeeming her and preventing her from contracting the guilt of original sin.

Why, then, does St. Thomas say that because the Blessed Virgin was not sanctified before animation, therefore she could be sanctified only after animation?

Such a conclusion would hold if it were a question of the order of Nature: *a thing must be before it is such* (*prius est esse quam esse tale*): and, therefore, the soul must be, before it is sanctified. But if St. Thomas held for a posteriority of time, no matter how short, we ask how it was that he did not perceive the fallacy of the argument, since it might be neither before nor after, but in the very instant of, animation.

The question is answered thus:

St. Thomas, as a Doctor of the Church and in matters which were not then *de fide*, is a witness to the expression of the faith of his time. Hence his line of argument coincides with, because it follows, that of St. Bernard, Peter Lombard, Alexander of Hales, Albert the Great, and St. Bonaventure. It was not likely that St. Thomas would differ from the great masters of his time, who failed to understand that the grace of redemption might at the same time be one of preservation

and prevention. Nor is it likely that St. Thomas had any reliable information about the movement¹ in progress at that time towards a belief in the Immaculate Conception. No doubt he knew something of it, but the name of its promoters would have weighed little with him as compared with those of Bernard, Albert, Peter, Alexander, and Bonaventure. And it must not be forgotten that amongst those who upheld the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, not a few ascribed the privilege as being absolute, and not one of preservation and redemption. Hence it is that St. Thomas insists on two things : (1) that the Mother of God was redeemed, and (2) that the grace of her sanctification was a grace of preservation. And, be it remarked in conclusion, these two points, so much insisted on by St. Thomas, are the very basis of the Catholic doctrine of the Immaculate Conception.

¹ Principally in England, where, owing to the influence of St. Anselm (1109), the doctrine was maintained by Eadmer (1137), Nicholas of St. Albans (1175), Osbert of Clare (1170), Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln (1253), William of Ware (1300), who was the master of Duns Scot (1308).

EXPOSITION OF THE APOSTLES' CREED

FIRST ARTICLE

I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY, CREATOR OF
HEAVEN AND EARTH

THE first thing that a Christian needs is faith, without which no man is a faithful Christian. Now faith confers four boons.

(1) Faith unites the soul to God : because by faith the Christian soul is in a sense wedded to God : *I will espouse thee to myself in faith* (Osee ii, 20). For this reason, when we are baptized, we begin by confessing our faith when we are asked : *Dost thou believe in God ?* for baptism is the first of the sacraments of faith. Hence our Lord said (Mark xvi, 16) : *He that shall believe and shall be baptized shall be saved* ; in as much as without faith baptism is of no avail. Consequently we must realise that without faith no man is acceptable to God : *Without faith it is impossible to please God* (Heb. xi, 6). Wherefore Augustine commenting on Rom. xiv, 23, *All that is not of faith is sin*, says : *Without the recognition of the eternal and unchangeable truth all virtue is but a sham even in the best of men.*

(2) Faith introduces into us a beginning of eternal life : since eternal life is nothing else than to know God : thus our Lord said (John xvii, 3) : *This is eternal life, to know thee, the only true God.* This knowledge of God begins in us by faith, and is perfected in the life to come, when we shall know Him as He is : *Faith is the substance of the things to be hoped for* (Heb. xi, 1) ; wherefore no man can obtain the happiness of Heaven, which is the true knowledge of God, unless he know Him first by faith : *Blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed* (John xx, 29).

(3) Faith is our guide in the present life : since in order to lead a good life a man needs to know what is necessary

in order to live well : and if in order to discover all that is necessary for that purpose he had to rely on his own efforts, either he would never discover them all or he would only do so after a long time. Now faith teaches us all that is necessary for leading a good life : since we learn thereby that there is one God who is the rewarder of the good and the punisher of the wicked : and that there is another life besides this ; and other like truths whereby we are sufficiently enticed to do good and avoid evil : *The just man liveth by faith* (Hab. ii, 4). This is also shown from the fact that before the coming of Christ none of the philosophers was able, however great his effort, to know as much about God or about the means necessary for obtaining eternal life, as any old woman knows by faith since Christ came down upon earth : *The earth is filled with knowledge of God* (Isa. xi, 9).

(4) By faith we overcome temptations : *The saints by faith have conquered kingdoms* (Heb. xi, 33). The reason is that all temptation is from either the devil, or the world, or the flesh. The devil tempts thee to disobey God and to refuse to be subject to Him : and this is removed by faith, in as much as it teaches us that He is the Lord of all, wherefore we must obey Him : *Your adversary the devil goeth about seeking whom he may devour : whom resist ye strong in faith.*¹—The world tempts us either by the attractions of prosperity or by fear of adversity : and these we overcome by faith because it teaches us that there is a better life than this, so that we despise the good things of this world and fear not its afflictions : *This is the victory that overcometh the world, our faith* (1 John v, 4) ; and also because it teaches us that there are evils still greater, those, namely, of hell.—The flesh tempts us by drawing us to the passing pleasures of this life : while faith teaches us that if we seek them unduly we shall forfeit eternal happiness : *In all things putting on the shield of faith* (Eph. vi, 16). Hence we gather how profitable it is to have faith.

But someone will object that it is foolish to believe what one cannot see, and that one ought not to believe what one sees not.—I reply in the first place that this difficulty disappears if we consider the imperfection of our intelligence : for if a man were able by himself to know perfectly all things, visible and invisible, it would be foolish for us to believe

¹ 1 Pet. v, 8.

what we do not see : whereas our knowledge is so imperfect that no philosopher has ever been able to discover perfectly the nature of a single fly. Thus we are told that a certain philosopher spent thirty years in solitude in the endeavour to know the nature of the bee. If, then, our intelligence is so weak, is it not foolish to refuse to believe anything about God, except such things alone which we are able to find out by ourselves ? In fact, this is condemned by the words of Job (xxxvi, 26) : *Behold God is great and surpasseth our knowledge.*—Another solution is that supposing a master were to make a statement in his own particular branch of knowledge, an ignoramus would be accounted no small fool if he were to contradict him for no other reason but that he could not understand what the master said. Now without doubt the intelligence of an angel surpasses that of the greatest philosopher far more than the intelligence of the latter surpasses that of an ignoramus. Wherefore the philosopher is a fool to disbelieve what an angel says, and a much greater fool if he disbelieves what God says : for he is condemned in the words of Eccclus. iii, 25 : *Many things are shown to thee above the understanding of men.*—Yet a third solution is that life in this world would be altogether impossible if one were only to believe what one sees. How can one live without believing others ? How is a man to believe that So-and-so is his father ? Hence man must needs believe others in matters that he cannot know perfectly by himself. Now no one is to be believed as much as God is : wherefore those who will not believe the statements of faith are not wise, but foolish and proud. Thus the Apostle says (1 Tim. vi, 4) : *He is proud, knowing nothing* : and (2 Tim. i, 12) : *I know in whom I have believed ; and I am certain* : and (Eccclus. ii, 8) it is written : *Ye who fear God, believe in him.*—Fourthly, we may reply that God proves the truth of the things which faith teaches. Thus if a king sends a letter to which he has attached his seal, none will dare say that this letter was not written by the king's orders. Now it is plain that whatsoever the saints have believed and handed down to us concerning Christ's faith is confirmed by God's seal, which is to be seen in those works which no mere creature is able to do, namely, the miracles whereby Christ confirmed the doctrine of the Apostles and of other saints.

And if anyone say that nobody has seen those miracles done,

I reply that it is a well-known fact, related in Pagan histories, that the whole world worshipped idols and persecuted the faith of Christ ; yet now behold all, the wise, the noble, the rich, and the powerful and the great have been converted at the words of a few simple poor men who preached Christ. Now was this a miracle or was it not ? If it was, then you have what you asked for : if you say it was not a miracle, then I say that you could not have a greater miracle than the conversion of the whole world without miracles, and we need to seek no further.

Accordingly no one should doubt about the faith, and we should believe what is of faith even more than the things that we see : since man's sight may be deceived, whereas God's knowledge is never at fault.

*I believe in one*¹ *God*. The first of all the articles of faith is that the faithful must believe in one God.

It will be well to consider what is meant by this word *God*, for it signifies the governor and provider of all things : wherefore to believe that there is a God is to believe in one whose government and providence extend to all things : whereas one who believes that all things happen by chance does not believe that there is a God. No one, however, is so foolish as not to believe that the things of the physical world are subject to someone's government, providence and disposition ; seeing that they are regulated according to a certain order and time. Thus we see the sun, the moon, and the stars and other parts of the physical world all holding a certain course, which would not happen if they were the sport of chance : and therefore a man would be a fool not to believe in God : *The fool hath said within his heart : There is no God* (Ps. xiii, 1). Some there are, however, who, although they believe that nature is governed and ordained by God, deny that human actions come under His providence, who believe, in fact, that human actions are not disposed by God. Their reason is that they see that in this world the good suffer and the wicked prosper, which would seem to argue against God's providence in regard to mankind : wherefore it is said in their person (Job xxii, 14) : *He walks about the poles of the earth ; nor does he consider our things*. But this is very foolish : for they behave like one who knows nothing about

¹ The word *one* was added in the Nicene Creed.

medicine, and who, seeing the physician prescribing water for one invalid and wine for another, according to the requirements of the medical art, believes this to be done at haphazard ; whereas it is the medical art which with good reason prescribes water for the one and wine for the other. It is so with God : who with good cause and by His providence disposes such things as are necessary to man : and thus He afflicts some good men, and allows certain wicked men to prosper. Wherefore anyone who believes this to be the result of hazard is, and is reputed, a fool : since the only cause of his believing thus is because he knows not the art and the reason of the divine disposition : *Would that he might show thee the secrets of wisdom, and that his law is manifold* (Job xi, 6).

We must, therefore, firmly believe that God governs and disposes not only the things of nature, but also the acts of men : *And they have said : The Lord shall not see ; neither shall the God of Jacob understand. Understand, ye senseless among the people ; and, ye fools, be wise at last. He that planted the ear, shall he not hear ? Or he that formed the eye, shall he not consider ? . . . The Lord knoweth the thoughts of men* (Ps. xciii, 7-11). Therefore, He sees all things, our thoughts and the secrets of our will. For this reason men are placed under a special obligation of doing good, since all their thoughts and deeds are manifest to the all-seeing God : hence the Apostle says : *All things are naked and open to his eyes* (Heb. iv, 13).

Moreover, we must believe that this God who disposes and rules all things is but one God. The reason of this is because human affairs are found to be rightly disposed when many things are subject to the disposition and government of one. A multitude of heads often produces dissension among the subjects ; wherefore since the divine government surpasses human government it is evident that the world must be governed not by many gods, but by one only.

There are four motives which led men to believe in many gods. (1) The first is the weakness of human intelligence, the result being that through inability to transcend the corporeal world, men did not believe that there was any nature besides that of sensible bodies : and consequently they held that the world is disposed and ruled by those bodies which they observed to surpass all others in beauty and nobility : to which accordingly they attributed and paid divine worship :

and these were the sun, the moon, and the stars. It was with these men as it would be with one who, going to court in order to see the king, thinks anyone that is well dressed or exercises an office to be the king. Of such men it is said (Wisd. xiii, 2): *They have imagined . . . the sun and moon . . . or the circle of the stars to be the gods that rule the world*: and (Isa. li, 6): *Lift up your eyes to heaven and look down to the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish like smoke, and the earth shall be worn away like a garment, and the inhabitants thereof shall perish in like manner. But my salvation shall be for ever, and my justice shall not fail.*

(2) The second motive was human flattery: since some men with the desire to flatter their masters and sovereigns, gave them the honour due to God, by obeying them and subjecting themselves to them, even so as to make gods of them when they were dead, or even while yet in life: *Let every nation know that Nabuchodonosor is god upon the earth, and beside him is no other* (Judith v, 29).

(3) The third motive was carnal affection for their children and kindred: thus some, through an excessive love for their own relatives, raised statues to them after they had died, the result being that they paid divine honour to these statues. Of these is said (Wisd. xiv, 21): *Men serving either their affection or their kings gave the incommunicable name to stones and wood.*

(4) The fourth cause was the wickedness of the devil. For he it was who from the beginning desired to be equal to God: thus he says (Isa. xiv, 13): *I will place my throne in the North; I will ascend into heaven; I will be like the most High.* This desire he has never put aside; wherefore he strives his utmost to be worshipped by men and to have sacrifice offered to himself: not that he is pleased in the dog or cat that is offered to him, but in being paid the reverence due to God. Hence he said to Christ (Matt. iv, 9): *All these things will I give thee if falling down thou wilt adore me.* With this purpose the demons entered idols, and answered when questioned, that they might be revered as gods: *All the gods of the gentiles are demons* (Ps. cxv, 5). Thus the Apostle says (1 Cor. x, 20): *The things which the heathens sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils and not to God.*

Now although all this is horrible, yet from time to time

there have been some to whom these four causes apply : and who though neither in word nor thought, nevertheless in deed show that they believe in many gods. Thus those who believe that the heavenly bodies can influence the human will, and who choose certain seasons for their actions, made gods and rulers of the heavenly bodies, and cast horoscopes : *Be not afraid of the signs from heaven which the heathens fear, for the laws of the people are vain* (Jer. x, 2).—Again, all those who obey kings rather than God, in matters wherein they ought not to obey them, make them their gods : *We ought to obey God rather than men* (Acts v, 29).—Again, those who love their children or their kindred more than God, imply by their deeds that there are many gods.—Or again, those who love the pleasures of the table more than God, and of whom the Apostle says (Phil. iii, 19) : *Whose God is their belly*.—Again, all those who practise sorcery and incantations, treat the demons as though they were gods, inasmuch as they seek to obtain from the demons that which God alone can give, namely the knowledge of the occult and the truth about future events. We must, therefore, believe that there is but one God.

The Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

As stated above, the first thing that we must believe is that there is but one God : now, the second is that this God is the Creator and Maker of heaven and earth, *of things visible and invisible*. Without having recourse to subtle explanations, it is enough for our present purpose to illustrate by means of a homely example the fact that all things were created and made by God. Supposing a man on entering a house were to feel heat in the porch, and on going further in to feel the heat increasing, and all the more as he penetrated further within, without doubt he would believe that there was a fire in the house, even though he saw it not, that must be the cause of all this heat : and the same will happen to anyone who considers this world in detail. For he will observe that all things are arranged according to their degrees of beauty and excellence, and that the nearer they are to God the more beautiful and the better they are. Hence the heavenly bodies are more beautiful and more noble than the bodies of the lower world, and invisible things than visible : wherefore we must believe that all these things come from one God who gives each thing

its being and excellence : *All men are vain in whom there is not the knowledge of God ; and who by these good things that are seen could not understand him that is ; neither by attending to the works have acknowledged who was the workman* (Wisd. xiii, 1) ; and further on (verse 5) : *By the greatness of the beauty and of the creature the Creator of them may be seen so as to be known thereby.* We must, therefore, take it as clearly demonstrated that all the things that are in the world come from God.

In connection with this matter three errors are to be avoided. The first is that of the Manicheans, who say that all things visible were created by the devil : wherefore they assert that God created only invisible things. The reason for their falling into this error was that while asserting that God is the sovereign good, which is true, they said that whatsoever comes from good is itself good : so that through not knowing how to discern what is good and what is evil, they believed that whatsoever is in any way evil, is altogether evil ; for instance, they said that fire, because it burns, and water, because it suffocates, are evils simply, and so on. Wherefore seeing that none of these sensible things is good simply, but is in some way evil and defective, they asserted that all visible things were made, not by the good God, but by an evil god. Arguing against these, Augustine employs the following example. If a man were to enter a smith's forge and injure himself by colliding with the smith's tools, and then blame the smith for his wickedness in possessing such tools, he would be a fool, since the smith has those tools for his work ; even so is it foolish to say that a creature is evil because in some way it is harmful : since what is harmful to one is useful to another. This error is contrary to the Church's faith, and therefore we say¹ : *Of all things visible and invisible.—In the beginning God created heaven and earth* (Gen. i, 1).—*All things were made by him* (John i, 3).

The second is the error of those who say that the world has existed from eternity : in reference to which Peter says (2 Pet. iii, 4) : *Since the time that the fathers slept, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.* They were led into this error through not knowing how to imagine the world as having had a beginning. Referring to these, Rabbi Moses says that they are like a man placed on an island

¹ In the Nicene Creed.

immediately after his birth, and remaining in ignorance of the manner of child-bearing and child-birth, who, on someone telling him after he has grown up how man is conceived, carried in the womb, and born into the world, refuses to believe his informant because he deems it impossible for a man to be in his mother's womb. Even so these, in view of the present state of the world, believe not that it had a beginning. This also is contrary to the Church's faith: and, therefore, to remove this we say: *Maker¹ of heaven and earth*, since if they were made it goes without saying that they did not always exist; hence we read in the psalm (Ps. cxlviii, 5): *He spake and they were made*.

The third is the error of those who asserted that God made the world from preajacent matter. They were led to their position, through wishing to measure God's power by our own power; and, therefore, seeing that man can make nothing without preajacent matter, they believed that it is the same with God; and consequently they said that in producing things God had preajacent matter at His disposal. But this is not true, because man is unable to make anything without preajacent matter in as much as he is a particular maker, and can only introduce this or that form into this or that matter which is presupposed from another source. The reason for this is that a man's power is confined to the form only, and consequently his causality is confined to the production of this or that form. On the other hand God is the universal cause of all things, and creates not only the form, but also the matter; so that He made all things out of nothing: wherefore to remove this position we say: *Creator of heaven and earth*. For to create and to make differ in that the former is to make something out of nothing; and consequently, if God made something out of nothing we must needs believe that He can re-make all things if they happen to be destroyed: so that He can give sight to the blind, raise the dead to life, and work other similar miracles: *For thy power is at hand when thou wilt* (Wisd. xii, 18).

These thoughts afford us five fruits. (1) In the first place they lead us to knowledge of the divine majesty, in as much as the maker is greater than the things he makes. Therefore, since God is the maker of all things, it follows that He is

¹ Nicene Creed.

greater than all things : *With whose beauty if they being delighted took them to be gods, let them know how much the Lord of them is more beautiful than they. . . . Or if they admired their power and their effects, let them understand by them that he who made them is mightier than they* (Wisd. xiii, 3, 4). Thus think or imagine whatsoever we will, it is less than God : *Behold, God is great, exceeding our knowledge* (Job xxxvi, 26).

(2) Secondly, we are led to give thanks to God, because seeing that God is the Creator of all things, it is certain that all that we are, and all that we have come from God : hence the Apostle says (1 Cor. iv, 7) : *What hast thou that thou hast not received?—The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, the world and all they that dwell therein* (Ps. xxiii, 1). For which reason we owe Him thanksgiving : *What shall I render unto the Lord for all the things that he has rendered to me ?* (Ps. cxv, 12).

(3) Thirdly, we are encouraged to be patient in adversity. For though all creatures come from God and therefore are good as regards their nature, yet if in any way they be harmful and penal to us, we must believe that what is penal is from God : but not that which is sinful : because no evil comes from God except in so far as it is directed to a good ; and consequently, if all the pains that a man suffers come from God, he must bear them patiently. For by pain sins are cleansed, the guilty are humbled and the good are urged on to the love of God : *If we have received good things at the Lord's hands, why should we not receive evil ?* (Job ii, 10).

(4) Fourthly, we are persuaded to make a good use of creatures, since we ought to employ creatures for the purpose to which God made them. Now this purpose is twofold : namely, for the glory of God, since *the Lord hath made all things for himself* (Prov. xvi, 4), i.e. for His own glory ; and for our profit : *Which the Lord thy God created for the service of all the nations* (Deut. iv, 19). We must, therefore, make use of things for God's glory, in such wise as thereby to please God, and to profit ourselves, i.e. so as to avoid sin in using them : *All things are thine ; and we have given thee what we have received from thy hand* (1 Par. xxix, 14). Hence whatsoever thou hast, be it knowledge or beauty, thou must refer all and use all for the glory of God.

(5) Fifthly, we are led to acknowledge man's dignity. For God made all things for man's sake : *Thou hast subjected*

all things under his feet (Ps. viii, 8): moreover, after the angels, man of all creatures is most like God: *Let us make man to our own image and likeness* (Gen. i, 26). He did not say this of the heaven or of the stars, but of man; not, indeed, as regards man's body, but as regards his soul which is endowed with a free will and is incorruptible, wherein he resembles God more than other creatures do. We must, therefore, realise that after the angels man excels all other creatures, and that in no way must we forfeit our dignity on account of sin or for the sake of an inordinate desire for corporeal things which are beneath us and made to serve us: and we must conduct ourselves according to the purpose for which God made us; seeing that He made man to preside over all things on earth and to be subject to Himself. Accordingly, we must rule and hold dominion over the things of the earth, but we must be subject to God by obeying and serving Him, and thus we shall attain to the enjoyment of God. May He grant that this be so.

SECOND ARTICLE

AND IN JESUS CHRIST HIS ONLY SON, OUR LORD

Not only must Christians believe in one God and that He is the Creator of heaven and earth and of all things, but they must also believe that God is the Father, of whom Christ is the True Son. As the blessed Peter says in his second canonical Epistle (i, 16), this is no fable, but an ascertained fact proved by the voice on the mountain: *For we have not by following artificial fables made known to you the power and the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eye-witnesses of his greatness. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, the voice coming down to him from the excellent glory; 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye him.'* And this voice we heard brought from heaven when we were with him in the holy mount. Moreover, on several occasions Jesus Christ called God His Father, and Himself the Son of God: and the apostles and holy fathers reckoned this among the articles of faith, saying: *And (I believe) in Jesus Christ, his, i.e. God's, only Son.*

There were heretics, however, who believed this in a

distorted sense. Thus Photinus asserted that Christ is the Son of God in the same way as any other good men, who, by leading a good life, merit to be called God's sons by adoption through doing God's will: and so Christ who led a good life and did the will of God merited to be called a Son of God. He pretended, in fact, that Christ did not exist before the Blessed Virgin, and that He began to exist when He was conceived of her. Accordingly he erred in two ways: first by denying that He was the Son of God by nature: secondly, by asserting that with regard to His whole being, Christ began to exist in time: whereas our faith holds that He is the Son of God by nature, and that He is from eternity. Now Holy Scripture explicitly contradicts him on both counts. Against the first it is stated not only that He is the Son, but also that He is the only begotten Son: *The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him* (John i, 18).—Against the second: *Before Abraham was, I am* (John viii, 58): and it is undeniable that Abraham existed before the Blessed Virgin. For this reason the holy Fathers added in another Creed,¹ against the first error, *The only begotten Son of God*; and against the second, *And born of the Father before all ages*.

Sabellius, although he said that Christ was before the Blessed Virgin, denied the distinction between the Person of the Father and the Person of the Son, and said that the Father Himself became incarnate, so that the Person of the Father is the same as that of Christ. But this is erroneous, since it removes the Trinity of Persons, contrary to the words of John viii, 16: *I am not alone, but I and the Father who sent me*; and it is plain that no one is sent by himself. Accordingly Sabellius lied, and therefore in the Creed of the Fathers, it was added, *God of God, Light of Light*; in other words, we must believe in God the Son of God the Father, and the Son who is the Light of the Father who is Light.

Arius, while admitting that Christ was before the Blessed Virgin, and that the Person of the Father was distinct from that of the Son, nevertheless attributed to Christ three things. First, that the Son of God is a creature: second, that He is the highest of all creatures made by God, not from

¹ The Nicene.

eternity, but in the course of time : third, that God the Son was not of the same nature as God the Father, and that therefore He was not truly God. But this again is erroneous and contrary to the authority of Holy Scripture. For it is said (John x, 30) : *I and the Father are one*, namely, in nature : and consequently as the Father always was, so also was the Son ; and as the Father is true God, so also is the Son. Accordingly whereas Arius asserted that Christ was a creature, it is said by the Fathers in the Creed :¹ *True God of true God* ; and whereas he said that Christ was not from eternity but from time, on the contrary it is said in the Creed :¹ *Begotten, not made* ; and against his assertion that Christ was not of the same nature as the Father, it was added in the Creed,¹ *Consubstantial with the Father*.

It is clear then that we must believe that Christ is the only begotten of God, and the true Son of God ; that He has always existed together with the Father ; that the Person of the Son is distinct from the Person of the Father ; and that He is of one nature with the Father. This, however, in the present life we believe by faith, but we shall know it by perfect vision in eternal life : and accordingly for our own consolation we shall make a few observations on this point.

We must observe then that various things have various ways of generating : while in God generation is other than the generation of other things : wherefore we cannot obtain a notion of divine generation except from the generation of that creature which approaches nearest to a likeness to God. Now nothing is so like God as the human soul, as we have stated. And the manner of generation in the soul is that a man by his soul excogitates something which is called the concept of the intellect : which concept proceeds from the soul as its father, and is called the word of the mind or of man. Accordingly the soul by thought generates its word : and thus the Son of God is nothing else but the Word of God, not like the word that is uttered externally, for this is transitory, but as the word conceived inwardly. Therefore this same Word of God is of one nature with God and equal to God. Thus the Blessed John in speaking of the Word of God destroyed three heresies. Firstly, the

¹ The Nicene.

heresy of Photinus, when he says (i. 1), *In the beginning was the Word*; secondly, that of Sabellius, when he says, *And the Word was with God*; thirdly, that of Arius, when he says, *And the Word was God*.

Now a word is not in us in the same way as it is in God. In us our own word is accidental: whereas in Him, the Word of God is the same as God Himself, since there is nothing in God that is not the divine essence. Yet none can say that God has not a Word, for it would follow that God is most foolish: and therefore, just as God always was, so also His Word always was. Now, even as a craftsman makes all things by means of the form or word which he has preconceived in his mind, so, too, God makes all things by His Word as by His art: *All things were made by him* (John i, 3). If, then, God's Word is His Son, and all His words bear a certain likeness to that Word, we ought in the first place to be willing to hear God's words; since it is a sign that we love God, if we willingly hear His words.—Secondly, we ought to believe the words of God, since thereby the Word of God, i.e. Christ who is God's Word, dwells in us, or to quote the Apostle (Eph. iii, 17): *That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith*.—*You have not his word abiding in you* (John v, 38).—Thirdly, the Word of God abiding in us should be continually in our thoughts: since not only should we believe in Him, but also meditate upon Him: else we would derive no profit from His presence: in fact, meditation of this kind is of great assistance against sin: *In my heart I have hidden thy words that I may not sin against thee* (Ps. cxviii, 11). Again, it is said of the just man (Ps. i, 2): *Day and night he shall meditate on His law*. Thus it is said of the Blessed Virgin (Luke ii, 19) that she *kept all these words, pondering on them in her heart*.—Fourthly, we ought to communicate God's Word to others, by admonishing them, preaching to them, inflaming their hearts: thus the Apostle wrote to the Ephesians (iv, 29): *Let no evil speech proceed from your mouth, but that which is good unto edification*; and to the Colossians (iii, 16): *Let the word of Christ dwell in you abundantly: in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another*; and again to Timothy (2, iv, 2): *Preach the word, be insistent in season and out of season, reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine*.—Lastly, we ought to put the words of God

into practice : *Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves* (Jas. i, 22).

These five were observed by the Blessed Virgin in their order when she begot the Word of God. First she *heard* : '*The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee*' (Luke i, 35) : then she consented by faith : '*Behold the handmaid of the Lord*' (ibid., 38) : thirdly, she held and bore Him in her womb : fourthly, she brought Him forth and gave birth to Him : fifthly, she nourished and fed Him. Hence the Church sings : *The Virgin alone gave her heaven-filled breast to the king of angels*.¹

THIRD ARTICLE

WHO WAS CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY GHOST, BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY

As we have shown, a Christian must believe not only that Christ is the Son of God, but also that He became man. Wherefore the blessed John having said many subtle things about the Word of God that are hard to understand, goes on to tell us of the incarnation, by saying (i, 14) : *And the Word was made flesh*. In order to throw some light on this subject, I shall illustrate it by means of two examples.

In the first place, without doubt, nothing is more like the Word of God than the unvoiced word that is conceived in man's heart. Now the word conceived in the heart is unknown to all save the one who conceived it : and it is first known to others when the voice gives utterance to it. Thus the Word of God while yet in the bosom of the Father was known to the Father alone ; but when He was clothed with flesh as a word is clothed with the voice, then He was first made manifest and known : *Afterwards he was seen on earth and conversed with men* (Baruch iii, 38).—Another example lies in the fact that although the voiced word is known by the hearing, it is not seen or touched : but when it is written it is both seen and touched. In like manner the Word of God became both visible and tangible when It was, as it were, written on our flesh : and just as the parchment on

¹ Fourth Responsory, Office of the Circumcision (Breviary O.P.).

which the king's word is written is called the king's word, so the man united to God's Word in unity of person is called the Word of God : *Take thee a great book and write in it with a man's pen* (Isa. viii, 1) : and therefore the holy Apostles said : *Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.*

On this point there arose many errors : wherefore the holy Fathers in another Creed, of the council of Nicea, made several additions whereby all these errors stand condemned.

Origen said that Christ was born and came into the world in order to save the demons also : and so he asserted that all the demons would be saved at the end of the world. But this is contrary to Holy Scripture : for it is said (Matt. xxv, 41) : *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, that was prepared for the devil and his angels.* Wherefore in order to exclude this the following clause was added : *Who for us men* (not for the demons) *and for our salvation . . .* thus stressing God's love for us.

Photinus admitted that Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, but asserted that He was a mere man, who by leading a good life, and doing God's will, merited to become a son of God, even as other holy men. And against this it is said (John vi, 38) : *I came down from heaven, not to do my will, but the will of him who sent me.* Now it goes without saying that He would not have come down thence unless He had been there : and if He were a mere man He would not have been in heaven : wherefore in order to exclude this, the following words were added : *He descended from heaven.*

The Manicheans said that although the Son of God always existed, and came down from heaven, yet He had flesh not really but only apparently. But this is false : in as much as it was unbecoming for the Teacher of truth to have anything false about Him : and therefore since He had flesh ostensibly, He really had it. Thus it is said (Luke xxiv, 39) : *Handle and see ; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see me to have.* Wherefore in order to exclude this, they added : *And he took flesh.*

Ebion,¹ who was of Jewish nationality, said that Christ

¹ The Ebionites were a sect whose doctrines were a mixture of Gnosticism and Judaism. It is not certain whence they took their name : and most probably Ebion is fictitious.

was born of the Blessed Virgin from sexual intercourse and fecundation by the male seed. But this is false, since the Angel said (Matt. i, 20): *For that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost*; and therefore the holy Fathers excluded this by adding: *By the Holy Ghost*.

Valentine, while confessing that Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost, taught that the Holy Ghost fashioned a heavenly body which He placed in the Virgin's womb: and this was Christ's body, so that the Blessed Virgin's co-operation was reduced to her serving as a place for Christ's body. Hence Valentine said that Christ's body passed through the Blessed Virgin as through a channel. But this is false, because the Angel said (Luke i, 35): *The Holy One that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God*; and the Apostle (Gal. iv, 4) says: *When the fulness of time came, God sent his Son made of a woman*. For which reason they added: *Born of the Virgin Mary*.

Arius and Apollinarius said that though Christ was the Word of God born of the Virgin Mary, He had no soul but the Godhead in lieu thereof. But this is contrary to Scripture, for Christ said (John xii, 27): *Now is my soul troubled*; and again (Matt. xxvi, 38): *My soul is sorrowful even unto death*. Wherefore the holy Fathers excluded this by adding, *And was made man*: because a man is composed of a soul and a body: so that Christ had whatsoever a man can have, except sin.

In that He is said to have become man, all the aforesaid errors stand condemned, beside all possible errors, especially that of Eutyches, who maintained that the divine and human natures were mixed together so as to form one nature in Christ, that is neither purely divine nor purely human. But this is false, since in that case He would not be a man, and this would be contrary to the words, *And was made man*.

Again the error of Nestorius stands condemned, for he said that the Son of God was united to man solely by indwelling. But this is false, because then He would not be a man, but in a man; whereas that He became man is declared by the Apostle (Phil. ii, 7): *He was in habit found as a man*.—*Ye seek to kill me, a man who have spoken the truth to you, which I have heard of God* (John viii, 40).

From what has been said we may gather a few points for our instruction.

(1) In the first place our faith is thereby strengthened. For instance, if anyone were to tell us about a far-distant country which he had never visited, we would not believe him to the same extent as if he had been there. Accordingly before Christ came into the world, the patriarchs, prophets and John the Baptist said certain things about God; yet men did not believe them as they believe Christ who was with God, who indeed was one with God; for which reason our faith is very strong, seeing that we have received it from Christ: *No man has ever seen God, the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him* (John i, 18). Hence it is that many mysteries of faith have been made known to us after the coming of Christ, which until then were hidden.

(2) Secondly, thereby our hope is raised. Because it is evident that God's Son took our flesh and came to us, not for a trifling reason, but for our exceeding great good: wherefore He bound Himself to us, as it were, by deigning to take a human soul and body and to be born of a Virgin, in order to bestow His Godhead on us, thus becoming man that man might become God: *By whom we have access through faith into this grace wherein we stand; and glory in the hope of the glory of the sons of God* (Rom. v, 2).

(3) Thirdly, charity is inflamed thereby. Because there is no greater proof of God's love than that God the Creator became a creature, that our Lord became our brother, and that the Son of God became the Son of man: *God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son* (John iii, 16). The very thought of this should kindle and inflame our hearts with the love of God.

(4) Fourthly, we are encouraged to keep our souls pure: in as much as our nature was ennobled and raised through being united to God to the extent of being assumed into union with a divine Person: wherefore after the incarnation the Angel would not allow the Blessed John to worship him (Apoc. xxii, 8, 9), whereas an angel had suffered this from even the greatest patriarchs. Consequently, man ought to bear this exaltation in mind and in consideration thereof should disdain to debase himself and his nature by falling

into sin. For this reason the blessed Peter (2 Peter i, 4) says : *By whom he hath given us most great and precious promises ; that by these you may be made partakers of the divine nature, flying the corruption of that concupiscence which is in the world.*

(5) Thereby is inflamed our desire of going to Christ. Thus a man whose brother is king in a far-distant country will have a great longing to go to him, to be with and stay with him : wherefore seeing that Christ is our brother, we should long to be with Him and to be united to Him : *Wheresoever the body is, there will the eagles be gathered together* (Matt. xxiv, 18). The Apostle also desired *to be dissolved and to be with Christ*. This same desire increases in us when we meditate on Christ's incarnation.

FOURTH ARTICLE

SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE, WAS CRUCIFIED, DEAD
AND BURIED

Just as a Christian is required to believe in the incarnation of the Son of God ; even so is it necessary that he believe in His Passion and Death, because as Augustine says : *His Birth would have profited us nothing had we not profited by His Redemption.* That Christ did indeed die for us is so hard to conceive that scarcely is our mind able to grasp it : in fact it is utterly beyond our understanding. The Apostle insinuates this when he says¹ (Acts xiii, 41) : *I work a work in your days, a work which you will not believe if any man shall tell it you.* In fact, so great is God's favour and love in our regard that He has done more for us than we are able to understand. However, we are not to believe that Christ suffered death in such wise that His Godhead died, but that His human nature died ; for He died not as God, but as man. This may be illustrated by examples.

The first is in ourselves. It is clear that when a man dies, it is not the soul, but the body or the flesh that dies when body and soul are separated. Accordingly when Christ died, it was not His Godhead that died, but His human nature. But surely if the Jews did not kill His Godhead, they sinned no more than if they had killed any other man—I reply that

¹ Quoting Hab. i, 5.

a man who bespatters a king's robe is as guilty as though he had bespattered the king himself. Hence the Jews, though they could not slay God, yet for slaying the human nature wherewith Christ was clothed, they were punished as though they had slain the Godhead.

Again, as we have said above, the Son of God is the Word of God, and the Word of God was made flesh even as the king's word is inscribed on parchment. If, then, one were to tear the king's parchment, he would be held as guilty as if he had torn the king's word. Hence the Jews are held equally guilty as if they had slain the Word of God.

But what need was there for the Word of God to suffer for us? That the need was great may be assigned to two reasons. (1) One was the need for a remedy for sin: (2) The other was the need for an example of what we ought to do.

(1) We find a remedy in as much as Christ's Passion proves a remedy for all the evils that we incur through sin: which evils are of five kinds.

(a) Firstly, there is the stain of sin: because when a man sins, he defiles his soul: for just as virtue is the soul's beauty, so is sin its stain: *How happeneth it, O Israel, that thou art in thy enemies' land? . . . Thou art defiled with the dead* (Baruch iii, 10, 11). This is removed by Christ's Passion: for Christ by His Passion poured out His blood as a laver wherein sinners are cleansed: *He hath washed us from our sins in his own blood* (Apoc. i, 5). Now the soul is cleansed by Christ's blood in Baptism which from Christ's blood derives the power of regeneration; and, consequently, when a man defiles himself with sin, he does an injury to Christ, and sins more grievously than before he was baptized: *A man making void the law of Moses dieth without any mercy under two or three witnesses; how much more, think you, he deserveth worse punishments who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God and hath esteemed the blood of the testament unclean?* (Heb. x, 28, 29).

(b) Secondly, we incur the anger of God. For just as a carnal man loves carnal beauty, so does God love spiritual beauty, which is that of the soul. When, therefore, the soul is defiled by sin, God is offended, and the sinner becomes an object of His hatred: *To God the wicked and his wickedness are hateful* (Wisd. xiv, 9). But Christ's Passion removes this, because He atoned to God the Father for sin, for which

man himself was unable to atone : whereas Christ's charity and obedience were greater than the sin and disobedience of the first man : *When we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son* (Rom. v, 10).

(c) Thirdly, we incur weakness : in as much as a man thinks that if he sin once he will be able afterwards to refrain from sinning ; whereas it is quite the reverse that happens : because by the first sin he is weakened and is more inclined to sin again ; likewise sin has a greater power over him ; and, moreover, so far as he is concerned, he puts himself in a state whence there is no escape—like a man who jumps into a well—except by the power of God. Hence after man had sinned, our nature was weakened and corrupt : and thus man was more prone to sin. But Christ diminished this weakness and infirmity, although He did not remove it altogether. And yet man is so strengthened and sin is so weakened by Christ's Passion, that sin has no longer such power over him : while man, by the help of God's grace bestowed in the Sacraments, which derive their efficacy from Christ's Passion, is able to endeavour to arise from his sins. Thus says the Apostle (Rom. vi, 6) : *Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin may be destroyed*. Because before Christ's Passion there were few who lived without falling into mortal sin : whereas afterwards many have lived and are living without mortal sin.

(d) Fourthly, we incur the debt of punishment, because God's justice demands that whosoever sins should be punished. Now punishment is awarded according to the guilt ; wherefore since the guilt of mortal sin is infinite, as being against the infinite good, namely God whose commandments the sinner holds in contempt, it follows that the punishment due to mortal sin is infinite. But Christ by His Passion delivered us from this punishment which He bore Himself : *He bore our sins*, i.e. the punishment due to our sins, *in his body* (1 Peter ii, 24) : because His Passion was so efficacious as to suffice to atone for all the sins of the whole world, even of a hundred thousand worlds. For this reason when a man is baptized he is released from all his sins ; hence also it is that a priest forgives sins ; and again that the more a man conforms to the Passion of Christ, the more is he pardoned, the more grace does he merit.

(e) Fifthly, we incur banishment from the kingdom : because those who offend their king are compelled to leave the kingdom : and thus on account of sin man is banished from paradise. For this reason immediately after he had sinned Adam was banished from paradise and the gates of Eden were closed. But Christ by His Passion opened the gates and recalled the exiles to the kingdom. For when Christ's side was pierced, the gates of paradise were opened, and by the shedding of His blood the stain of sin was deleted, God was appeased, man's weakness was removed, his punishment was expiated, the exiles were called back to the kingdom. Hence the thief received the immediate response : *This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise* (Luke xxiii, 43). This had not been said of old, not to Adam, not to Abraham, not to David : but *this day*, i.e. as soon as the gates were opened, the thief having sought pardon, found it : *Having . . . confidence in the entering into the holies by the blood of Christ* (Heb. x, 19).

(2) Accordingly it is clear how profitable was Christ's Passion as a remedy ; nor is it less profitable as an example. For, as the blessed Augustine says, Christ's Passion affords us a model in all the circumstances of life : since whosoever wishes to lead a perfect life needs but to despise what Christ despised on the cross, and to desire what He desired. There is not a virtue an example of which we do not find on the cross. If you seek an example of charity, *greater love no man hath than that a man lay down his life for his friends* (John xv, 13), and this Christ did on the cross. Wherefore if He laid down His life for us, we should not deem it a hardship to suffer any evils whatsoever for His sake : *What shall I render unto the Lord for all the things which he hath rendered to me ?* (Ps. cxv, 12).—If anyone seek an example of patience, he will find a most perfect example on the cross. For a man's patience is proved to be great on two counts : either when he suffers great evils patiently, or when he suffers that which he is able to avoid, yet avoids not. Now Christ suffered greatly on the cross : *Oh all ye that pass by the way, attend and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow* (Lam. i, 12) : and He suffered patiently in as much as *when he suffered he threatened not* (1 Peter ii, 23). *He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer*

(Isa. liii, 7). Moreover He could have escaped, and did not escape : *Thinkest thou that I cannot ask my Father and he will give me presently more than twelve legions of angels ?* (Matt. xxvi, 53). Great therefore was Christ's patience on the cross : *Let us run by patience to the fight proposed to us ; looking on Jesus the author and finisher of faith who, having joy set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame* (Heb. xii, 1, 2). —If you seek an example of humility, look on the Crucified : although He was God, He chose to be judged by Pontius Pilate and to suffer death : *Thy cause hath been judged as that of the wicked* (Job xxxvi, 17) ; truly 'as of the wicked' : *Let us condemn him to a most shameful death* (Wisd. ii, 20). The Master chose to die for His servant ; the Life of the Angels suffered death for man : *Made obedient unto death* (Phil. ii, 8). —If you seek an example of obedience, follow Him who was made obedient to the Father even unto death : *As by the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners : so also by the obedience of one, many shall be made just* (Rom. v, 19). —If you seek an example of contempt for earthly things, follow Him, the King of kings and Lord of lords, in whom are the treasures of wisdom ; and see Him on the cross, despoiled, derided, spat upon, scourged, crowned with thorns, served with gall and hyssop, dead. Therefore, take no account of your apparel or of your possessions, since *they parted my garments amongst them* (Ps. xxi, 19) :—nor of honours, since I suffered Myself to be jeered at and scourged,—nor of rank, since they plaited a crown of thorns and placed it on My head,—nor of pleasures, since *in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink* (Ps. xviii, 12). Thus Augustine in commenting on Heb. xii, 2 : *Who, having joy set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, says : 'The man Christ despised all earthly things in order to teach us to despise them.'*

FIFTH ARTICLE

HE DESCENDED INTO HELL, THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN
FROM THE DEAD

As we have stated, Christ's death, like that of other men, consisted in the separation of His soul from His body ; while His Godhead was so inseparably united to the man Christ,

that although His soul and body were separated from each other, His Godhead remained ever most perfectly united to both His soul and His body. Consequently in the tomb there was His body, together with the Son of God, who together with His soul descended into hell.

There are four reasons why Christ, together with His soul, descended into hell.

(1) The first was that He might bear the whole punishment of sin, so that thus He might wholly atone for the sin. Now the punishment of man's sin was not only the death of the body, there was also a punishment in the soul; for seeing that sin had been committed in the soul, the latter was punished by being deprived of the beatific vision, and as yet no atonement had been offered for the abolishment of this punishment. For this reason, after their death and before the coming of Christ, all, even the holy patriarchs, went down into hell. Accordingly in order to bear the entire punishment due to sinners, Christ chose not only to die, but also that His soul should descend into hell. Thus it is said (Ps. lxxxvii, 5): *I am counted among them that go down into the pit: I am become as a man without help, free among the dead: for others were there under constraint, whereas Christ was there as free.*

(2) The second reason was that He might bring perfect succour to all His friends, for He had His friends not only in the world but also in hell, since one is Christ's friend by having charity; and in hell there were many who had died in charity and faith in Christ to come, such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, besides other righteous and perfect men. And since Christ had visited His friends in the world and had succoured them by His death, He wished to visit His friends who were in hell and succour them by coming to them: *I will penetrate to all the lower parts of the earth, and will behold all that sleep, and will enlighten all that hope in the Lord* (Ecclus. xxiv, 45).

(3) A third reason was that He might completely overcome the devil, for a man's triumph over another is complete when he conquers him not only in the open field, but attacks him in his stronghold and deprives him of his kingdom and even of his dwelling-place. Now Christ had triumphed over the devil and had conquered him on the cross; where-

fore He said (John xii, 31): *Now is the judgement of the world, now shall the prince of this world, i.e. the devil, be cast out.* And, therefore, that His victory might be complete, it was His will to deprive him of his throne and imprison him in his own house, which is hell. For which reason He descended thither, deprived the devil of his own, bound him, and carried off his spoils: *Despoiling the principalities and powers, he hath exposed them confidently, openly triumphing over them in himself* (Col. ii, 15). Moreover, seeing that Christ had been given power and possession in Heaven and on earth, He wished to take possession of hell, so that, to quote the Apostle (Phil. ii, 10), *in the name of Jesus every knee should bow of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth.—In my name they shall cast out devils* (Mark xvi, 17).

(4) The fourth and last reason was to deliver the saints who were in hell because even as Christ wished to suffer death that He might deliver the living from death, so did He wish to descend into hell in order to deliver those that were there: *Thou also by the blood of thy testament hath sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water* (Zach. ix, 11): *O death, I will be thy death; O hell, I will be thy bite* (Osee xiii, 14). For although Christ destroyed death altogether, He did not altogether destroy hell, but took a piece out of it as it were, in that He did not deliver all that were there, but those only that were free from mortal as well as original sin. As regards the latter, they were freed personally therefrom by circumcision; or, before circumcision—either by the faith of their parents who were believers (as regards those who died before having the use of reason)—or by the sacrifices, and their faith in Christ to come (as regards adults). Yet all these were in hell as having contracted original sin from Adam, from which, as members of the human race, they could not be freed except by Christ. Wherefore He left there those who had gone down thither with the stain of mortal sin, as well as the uncircumcised children; and in this sense He said: *O hell, I will be thy bite.* Thus we know that Christ descended into hell, and why.

From this exposition we may gather four points for our instruction.

(1) The first is a firm hope in God, because no matter how great a man's afflictions may be, he should always hope

in God's assistance and trust in Him. For nothing is so grievous as to be in hell: wherefore if Christ freed those who were in hell, anyone, provided he is a friend of God, should be confident that God will deliver him from his straits whatever they be: *She (wisdom) forsook not the just when he was sold . . . and went down with him into the pit, and in bands she left him not* (Wisd. x, 13, 14). And seeing that God gives special assistance to His servants, anyone who serves God should be full of confidence: *He that feareth the Lord shall tremble at nothing: he shall not be afraid, for he is his hope* (Ecclus. xxxiv, 16).

(2) Secondly, we ought to conceive fear and cast away presumption. Because although Christ suffered for sinners and descended into hell, yet He did not deliver all, but only those who were free from mortal sin, as we have said; whereas He left those who had died in mortal sin. Consequently none who goes down thither in a state of mortal sin may hope for pardon, but he will remain in hell as long as the holy Fathers in paradise, namely, for all eternity: *These shall go into everlasting punishment: but the just into life everlasting* (Matt. xxv, 46).

(3) Thirdly, we should bear this in mind. Because as Christ descended into hell for our salvation, so we ought to take care to descend thither, by meditating on His sufferings, even as did the saintly Ezechias: *I said: In the midst of my days I shall go to the gates of hell* (Isa. xxxviii, 10). For anyone who in thought frequently goes down thither in life, is not likely to go down thither in death, because such thoughts withdraw us from sin. Thus we observe that the people of this world beware of evil doing for fear of temporal punishment: how much more then should they beware for fear of the punishment of hell, which is greater both in point of severity and in point of its manifold nature: *Remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin* (Ecclus. vii, 40).

(4) Fourthly, we may gather an example of love. For Christ descended into hell in order to deliver His own; and consequently we ought to descend thither in order to succour our friends, in as much as they are helpless: and therefore we ought to succour those who are in purgatory. Surely he were passing cruel who would not succour his friend in an earthly prison; much more cruel, then, is he

who succours not his friend in purgatory, since there is no comparison between the world's punishments and those of purgatory : *Have mercy on me, have mercy on me, at least you my friends, for the hand of the Lord hath touched me* (Job xix, 21). *It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they be loosed from sins* (2 Mach. xii, 46). This succour is given to them under three forms : by masses, by prayers, by alms, according to Augustine : and Gregory adds a fourth, viz. fasting. And no wonder, seeing that even in this world one friend can pay for another, but this applies only to those who are in purgatory.

The third day he rose again from the dead. Man needs to know two things, the glory of God and the punishment of hell ; because through being drawn by His glory, and terrified by His punishments, men are careful on their own account, and refrain from sin. Yet these things are very difficult for a man to know ; thus it is said of God's glory : *Who shall search out the things that are in heaven ?* (Wisd. ix, 16). This, however, is difficult to the earthly-minded, because *he that is of the earth . . . speaketh of the earth* (John iii, 31), whereas it is not difficult for the spiritual man, since *he that cometh from heaven is above all* (ibid.). Hence God came down from Heaven and took flesh in order to teach us heavenly things. It was also difficult to know about the punishments of hell ; for *no man hath been known to have returned from hell* (Wisd. ii, 1), which is said in the person of the wicked. But it cannot be said now, since just as He came down from Heaven in order to teach us heavenly things, so did He come back from hell in order to teach us about hell. Consequently we must believe not only that He became man and died, but also that He rose again from the dead. And therefore the Creed goes on : *The third day he rose again from the dead.* Now, as we are aware, there were several who rose from the dead, namely, Lazarus, the widow's son, and the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue. But Christ's resurrection differs from the resurrection of these and of others in four points. First as to the cause of resurrection, since others who came back to life arose not by their own power but either by Christ's power or at the prayer of a saint ; whereas Christ arose by His own power, for He was not only man but God, and the Godhead of the Word was never

separated either from His soul or from His body ; and therefore whenever He chose His body could resume His soul, and His soul could resume His body : *I have power to lay down (my life) and I have power to take it up again* (John x, 18). And although He died, it was neither through weakness nor of necessity, but of power, since He chose to die. This is evident from the fact that in the moment of dying He cried out with a loud voice, which others cannot do at the moment of death, for they die from weakness. Wherefore the centurion exclaimed (Matt. xxvii, 54) : *Verily this was the Son of God*. Therefore, just as by His own power He laid down His life, so by His own power He took it up again ; for which reason it is said *He rose again*, and not that He was raised up as though by another : *I have slept and have taken my rest : and I have risen up* (Ps. iii, 6). Nor is this contradicted by what is said (Acts ii, 32) : *This Jesus hath God raised again*, because both the Father and the Son raised Him up, in as much as the Father's power is one and the same as the Son's.—The second difference lies in the life to which He rose again : since Christ arose to a glorious and incorruptible life : *Christ is risen from the dead through the glory of the Father* (Rom. vi, 4), whereas others rise again to the same life which they had before, as instanced in Lazarus and others.—Thirdly, they differ in fruit and efficacy, for by virtue of Christ's resurrection all rise again : *Many bodies of the saints that had slept arose* (Matt. xxviii, 52), and the Apostle (1 Cor. xv, 20) declares that *Christ is risen from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep*. And behold how Christ by His Passion attained glory : *Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and so to enter into his glory ?* (Luke xxiv, 26), in order to teach us how we may be able to attain glory : *Through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God* (Acts xiv, 21).—Fourthly, they differ in point of time, in as much as the resurrection of others is deferred to the end of the world, except in special cases where some have been privileged to rise again before, as, for instance, the Blessed Virgin, and, according to a pious tradition, the blessed John the Evangelist, whereas Christ rose again on the third day. The reason for this is that Christ's resurrection, death and birth were for *our salvation*,¹ and therefore He chose to rise again at such a time as would be profitable to our salvation. Thus, had He

¹ Nicene Creed.

risen again at once people would not have believed that He had died, and if He had delayed His resurrection for a long time, His disciples would not have remained faithful, and consequently His Passion would have profited no one: *What profit is there in my blood whilst I go down to corruption?* (Ps. xxix, 10). For this reason, then, He rose again the third day, that it might be believed that He died, and that the disciples might not lose faith in Him.

From the above we may gather four points for our instruction:

(1) The first is that we strive to rise again spiritually from the death of the soul which we incur by sin, to the life of righteousness which becomes ours by repentance. Thus the Apostle (Eph. v, 14) says: *Arise, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall enlighten thee.* This is the first resurrection: *Blessed . . . is he that hath part in the first resurrection* (Apoc. xx, 6).

(2) The second is that we delay not to rise again until the time of death, but that we do so quickly, seeing that Christ rose again on the third day: *Delay not to be converted to the Lord, and defer it not from day to day* (Ecclus. v, 8); for when thou art burdened with sickness thou wilt be unable to think of those things which concern thy salvation, and also because by persisting in sin thou dost forfeit a share in all the good works that are done in the Church, besides incurring many evils. Moreover, the longer the devil possesses us, as Bede says, the more loath he is to lose his hold on us.

(3) The third is that we rise again to an incorruptible life: in other words, that we so rise as not to die again, through having the purpose not to sin again: *Christ rising from the dead dieth now no more; death shall no more have dominion over him* (Rom. vi, 9).—*So do you also reckon that you are dead to sin, but alive unto God, in Christ Jesus our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, so as to obey the lusts thereof: neither yield ye your members as instruments of iniquity unto sin: but present yourselves to God as those that are alive from the dead* (ibid., 11–13).

(4) The fourth point is that we rise unto a new and glorious life by avoiding whatsoever was an occasion or a cause of death and sin: *As Christ is risen from the dead by the*

glory of the Father, so may we also walk in the newness of life (ibid., 4). This new life is the life of righteousness which renews the soul and brings us to the life of glory. Amen.

SIXTH ARTICLE

HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN, SITTETH AT THE RIGHT HAND
OF GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY

Furthermore we must believe in Christ's ascension; in other words, we must believe that He ascended into Heaven on the fortieth day after His resurrection: hence the words, *He ascended into heaven*. In this connection we must observe three things—namely, that it was sublime, reasonable and profitable.

(1) In the first place it was sublime, since He ascended into Heaven. This is expounded in three ways:

(a) He ascended above all the corporeal heavens: *He . . . ascended above all the heavens* (Eph. iv, 10). This was realised first of all in Christ, since hitherto there was no earthly body except on earth, in fact, even Adam was in an earthly paradise.

(b) He ascended above all spiritual heavens, i.e. above spiritual natures: *Raising (Jesus) up from the dead and setting him on his right hand in the heavenly places, above all principality, and power, and virtue, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and he hath subjected all things under his feet* (Eph. i, 20–22).

(c) He ascended even to the Father's throne: *Lo, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven; and he came even to the Ancient of days* (Dan. vii, 13). *And the Lord Jesus after he had spoken to them was taken up to heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God* (Mark xvi, 19). Right hand is not to be taken literally, but metaphorically, when we speak of God: for Christ as God is said to sit at the right hand of the Father, i.e. in equality with the Father; while as man He sits at the Father's right hand, as being next to Him in the 'highest goods.'¹ Now this is what the devil craved for: *I will ascend into heaven: I will exalt my throne above the stars: I will sit*

¹ *Sum. Th.*, III, Q. lvi, art. 3.

in the mountain of the covenant, in the sides of the north. I will ascend above the height of the clouds : I will be like the most High (Isa. xiv, 13, 14). But Christ alone arose to that height and therefore it is said that *He ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of the Father.*—*The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand* (Ps. cix, i).

(2) Secondly, Christ's ascension was reasonable, in as much as it was *into Heaven* : and this for three reasons :

(a) Firstly, because Heaven was due to Christ according to His nature : since it is natural for a thing to return to the place whence it originated. Now Christ drew His origin from God who is above all : *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world : again I leave the world and I go to the Father* (John xvi, 28). *No man hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven* (ibid., iii, 13). And though the saints ascend to Heaven, they do not do so as Christ did, because Christ ascended by His own power, whereas the saints are drawn up thither by Christ. *Draw me after thee.*¹—Or it may be said that no man but Christ hath ascended into Heaven, because the saints do not ascend thither except as members of Christ, who is the head of the Church : *Wheresoever the body shall be, there shall the eagles be gathered together* (Matt. xxiv, 28).

(b) Secondly, Heaven was due to Christ on account of His victory. Because Christ was sent into the world in order to fight the devil ; and He overcame him : wherefore He merited to be exalted above all things : *I have overcome and am set down with my Father on his throne* (Apoc. iii, 21).

(c) Thirdly, it was reasonable on account of His humility. Because there never was so great humility as Christ's, who, although He was God, chose to become man, who, whereas He was Lord, chose to take the form of a servant, being made obedient unto death (Phil. ii, 8), and descended into the depths of hell. Therefore He merited to be exalted to the heights of Heaven, to the very throne of God : because humility is the road to exaltation : *He that humbleth himself shall be exalted* (Luke xiv, 11) : *He that descended is the same also who ascended above all the heavens* (Eph. iv, 10).

¹ Vulg., *Draw me : we will run after thee* (Cant. i, 3)

(3) Thirdly, Christ's ascension was profitable : and this in three ways :

(a) Firstly, as our Leader : in as much as He ascended in order to lead us thither : because whereas we knew not the way, He showed it to us : *He shall go up that shall open the way before them* (Mich. ii, 13)—and in order to assure us of the possession of the heavenly kingdom : *I go to prepare a place for you* (John xiv, 2).

(b) Secondly, to increase our confidence in Him : in as much as He ascended in order to intercede for us : (*He is able . . . to save . . . them*)¹ *that come to God by him : always living to make intercession for us* (Heb. vii, 25). *We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just* (1 John ii, 1).

(c) Thirdly, in order to draw our hearts to Himself : *Wheresoever thy treasure is, there also is thy heart* (Matt. vi, 21), so that we may despise temporal things : hence the Apostle says (Col. iii, 1) : *If you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth.*

SEVENTH ARTICLE

FROM THENCE HE SHALL COME TO JUDGE THE LIVING AND
THE DEAD

It belongs to the office of a king and of a lord to judge : *The king that sitteth on the throne of judgement scattereth away all evil with his look* (Prov. xx, 8). Since, then, Christ ascended into Heaven and sitteth at the right hand of God, as Lord of all, it is evident that judgement belongs to Him ; and for this reason in the rule of Catholic Faith we confess that *he will come to judge the living and the dead*. The same is expressed in the words of the angels (Acts i, 11) : *This Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven shall so come as you have seen him going into heaven.*

Three points must be considered in connection with this judgement. (1) The first is the form of the judgement ;

¹ The words in brackets are omitted by St. Thomas, who apparently read *Accedens* instead of *Accedentes* : *Having come to God by his own power he is always living, etc.*

(2) the second is that this judgement is to be feared ; (3) the third is how we are to prepare for this judgement.

(1) As regards the form of the judgement, three things are to be observed : (a) who will be judge ? (b) who will be judged ? (c) concerning what will they be judged ?

(a) The judge is Christ : *It is he who was appointed by God to be the judge of the living and the dead* (Acts x, 42), whether we take *the dead* to signify sinners, and *the living* to signify those who live aright ; or *the living* to mean literally those who will then be actually alive, and *the dead* to mean those who literally will have died. And He is judge not only as God, but also as man ; and this for three reasons :

Firstly, it is necessary that those to be judged should see the judge : while the Godhead is an object of so great delight, that none can see it without joy : wherefore none of the damned will be able to see it, since then he would rejoice. Hence it is necessary that He appear in the form of man so as to be seen by all : *He hath given him power to make judgement because he is the Son of man* (John v, 27).

Secondly, because He merited this position as man : because as man He was judged unjustly, for which reason God made Him judge over the whole world : *Thy cause hath been judged as that of the wicked ; cause and judgement thou shalt recover* (Job xxxvi, 17).

Thirdly, that men might not lose all hope if they be judged by a man : for if God alone were judge men would lose hope through terror : *They will see the Son of man coming in a cloud* (Luke xxi, 27).

All, past, present and future will be judged : thus the Apostle (2 Cor. v, 10) says : *We must all be manifested before the judgement-seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the proper things of the body according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil*. Of the wicked, some will be condemned, but not judged : namely unbelievers whose works will not be discussed, since *he that believeth not is already judged* (John iii, 18). Some will be both condemned and judged, namely the faithful who die in mortal sin : *The wages of sin is death* (Rom. vi, 23), because on account of the faith which they had they will not be excluded from the judgement. Of the good, some will be saved and will not be judged, namely those who for God's sake are poor in spirit ; indeed,

they will judge others : *You who have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the seat of his majesty, you also shall sit on twelve seats judging the twelve tribes of Israel* (Matt. xix, 28), which is to be referred not only to the disciples, but also to all the poor ; otherwise Paul¹ who laboured more than the others would not be of their number : and consequently we must understand these words to refer to all who follow the Apostles, and of men with an apostolic spirit. Hence the Apostle (1 Cor. vi, 3) says : *Know ye not that we shall judge the angels ?—The Lord will enter into judgement with the ancients of his people and its princes* (Isa. iii, 14). Some, however, will be both saved and judged, those, namely, who die in a state of righteousness : since although they died righteous, yet through being occupied with temporal matters they fell somewhat, and therefore they will be judged, yet saved ; in fact, they will be judged concerning all their works both good and bad : *Walk in the ways of thy heart . . . and know that for all these God will bring thee into judgement* (Eccles. xi, 9). *All things that are done God will bring into judgement for every error, whether it be good or evil* (ibid., xii, 14). *Every idle word that men shall speak they shall render an account for it in the day of judgement* (Matt. xii, 36). Of thoughts it is said (Wisd. i, 9) : *Inquisition shall be made into the thoughts of the ungodly*. Thus it is clear what will be the form of judgement.

(2) This judgement is to be feared for four reasons.

(a) On account of the judge's wisdom : for He knows all, thoughts, words, and deeds, since *all things are naked and open to his eyes* (Heb. iv, 13), and *all the ways of man are open to his eyes* (Prov. xvi, 2). He also knows our words : *The ear of jealousy heareth all things* (Wisd. i, 10), as well as our thoughts : *The heart is perverse above all things and unsearchable : Who can know it ? I, the Lord who search the heart and prove the reins : who give to everyone according to his way, and according to the fruit of his devices* (Jer. xvii, 9, 10). Moreover, the witnesses will be infallible, namely men's own consciences : *Their conscience bearing witness to them : and their thoughts between themselves accusing or also defending one another, in the day when God shall iudge the secrets of men* (Rom. ii, 15, 16).

¹ Cf. the Venerable Bede's homily on this passage (Dominican Breviary : feast of the Conversion of St. Paul).

(b) On account of the judge's power, for He is almighty in Himself: *Behold the Lord God shall come with strength* (Isa. xl, 10), and also almighty in others: *The whole world shall fight with him against the unwise* (Wisd. v, 21); hence Job said (x, 7): *Whereas there is no man that can deliver out of thy hand*: and the Psalmist (cxxxviii, 8): *If I ascend into heaven thou art there: if I descend into hell thou art present*.

(c) Thirdly, on account of the judge's inflexible justice. Because now is the time for mercy, whereas the time to come will be the time for justice only: wherefore the present time is ours, but the future time will be God's only: *When I shall take a time I shall judge justices* (Ps. lxxiv, 3). *The jealousy and rage of the husband will not spare in the day of revenge; nor will he yield to any man's prayers; nor will he accept for satisfaction ever so many gifts* (Prov. vi, 34, 35).

(d) Fourthly, on account of the judge's anger. For to the just He will present a sweet and smiling countenance: *They shall see the king in his beauty* (Isa. xxxiii, 10): whereas to the wicked He will appear angry and pitiless, so that they will say to the mountains: *Fall upon us and hide us from the . . . wrath of the Lamb* (Apoc. vi, 16). This wrath does not imply disturbance of mind in God, but the effect of wrath, namely the eternal punishment inflicted on sinners. Origen says: *How straitened will the ways of sinners be at the judgement; and yet over and above the Judge will be incensed against them*.

(3) There are four remedies against this fear: (a) The first is good deeds: *Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good; and thou shalt have praise from the same* (Rom. xiii, 3).

(b) The second is confession and repentance of the evil done: and this should include three conditions, sorrow of heart, shame in confession, and rigour of satisfaction: and these atone for eternal punishment.

(c) The third is almsdeeds which cleanse us from all stains: *Make unto yourselves friends of the mammon of iniquity that when you shall fail they may receive you into everlasting dwellings* (Luke xvi, 9).

(d) The fourth is charity, namely the love of God and our neighbour: for this *charity covereth a multitude of sins* (1 Pet. iv, 8; Prov. x, 12).

EIGHTH ARTICLE

I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY GHOST

As we have said above, the Word of God is the Son of God, even as man's word is a conception of man's intellect. Now man's word is sometimes a dead word ; for instance, if he thinks of what he ought to do, whereas he has not the will to do it : such is faith without works, in which case faith is said to be dead (Jas. ii, 26). But God's is a living Word : *The word of God is living* (Heb. iv, 12), and therefore in God besides the Word there is will and love : hence Augustine (*De Trin.* ix, 10) says : *The Word of which we wish to speak is knowledge with love.* Now just as the Word of God is the Son of God ; so is God's love the Holy Ghost : and consequently a man has the Holy Ghost when he loves God : *The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to us* (Rom. v, 5).

Now some through entertaining a false opinion about the Holy Ghost held Him to be a creature ; that He is less than the Father and the Son ; and that He is God's servant and minister. Wherefore in order to condemn these errors, the holy Fathers added to the second Creed five clauses about the Holy Ghost.

In the first place although there are other spirits, namely the angels, they are God's ministers : *Are they not all ministering spirits ?* (Heb. i, 14) : whereas the Holy Ghost is the Lord : *God is a Spirit* (John iv, 24) : *The Lord is a Spirit* (2 Cor. iii, 17) : and consequently *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty* (ibid.) : the reason being that He makes us love God and cease to love the world. Hence the words : *I believe in the Holy Ghost, Lord.*

Secondly, the soul's life is to be united to God, in as much as God is the life of the soul, as the soul is of the body. Now the Holy Ghost unites us to God by love, for He is Himself God's love, wherefore He gives life : *It is the Spirit that quickeneth* (John vi, 64) : hence they added, *and Life-giver.* The third is that the Holy Ghost is one in substance with the Father and the Son : because just as the Son is God's Word, so the Holy Ghost is the love of the Father and Son. Consequently He proceeds from both : and just as God's

Word is one in substance with the Father, even so God's Love is one in substance with the Father and the Son. Hence the addition, *Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son*; whence it is evident that He is not a creature.

The fourth is that He is to be worshipped equally with the Father and the Son: *True adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth* (John iv, 23). *Teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.* For this reason the following clause is added: *Who, together with the Father and Son, is equally adored.*

The fifth, whereby He is declared to be equal to God, is that the holy prophets spoke on behalf of God. Now it is clear that if the Holy Ghost were not God, it could not be said that the prophets spoke on His behalf: and yet Peter states (2 Pet. i, 21) that: *The holy men of God spoke inspired by the Holy Ghost.—The Lord God hath sent me, and his Spirit* (Isa. xlviii, 16), and, therefore, we have this clause added: *Who spoke by the prophets.*

Hereby two errors stand condemned: the error of the Manicheans who said that the Old Testament did not come from God: and this is false since the Holy Ghost spoke by the prophets—and the error of Priscilla and Montanus who maintained that the prophets spoke not on behalf of the Holy Ghost, but as though they were out of their minds.

We derive many fruits from the Holy Ghost.

(a) The first is that He cleanses us from our sins. The reason for this is that a thing is repaired by the same one as made it. Now the soul is created by the Holy Ghost, since by Him God makes all things: in as much as it is through loving His own goodness that God is the cause of all: *Thou lovest all the things that are, and hatest none of the things that thou hast made* (Wisd. xi, 25), in which sense Dionysius (*Div. Nom.*, iv) says: *God's love did not allow him to be barren.* Consequently the human heart which is ruined by sin must needs be restored by the Holy Ghost: *Send forth thy Spirit and they shall be created, and thou shalt renew the face of the earth* (Ps. ciii, 30). Nor need we wonder that the Spirit cleanses, seeing that all sins are forgiven through love: *Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much* (Luke vii, 47). *Charity covereth all sins* (Prov. x, 12). *Charity covereth a multitude of sins* (1 Pet. iv, 8).

(b) Secondly, the Holy Ghost enlightens our mind, because whatsoever we know, it is through the Holy Ghost that we know it : *But the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, whom the Father will send in my name, will himself teach you all things and will bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you* (John xiv, 26). *His unction teacheth you of all things* (1 John ii, 27).

(c) The Holy Ghost helps us, and to a certain extent compels us, to keep the commandments. Because none can keep the commandments unless he loves God : *If any man love me, he will keep my word* (John xiv, 23). Now the Holy Ghost makes us love God ; therefore He helps us to keep the commandments : *I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit within you ; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit in the midst of you ; and I will cause you to walk in my commandments and to keep my judgements and do them* (Ezech. xxxvi, 26, 27).

(d) He strengthens our hope of eternal life, in as much as He is a kind of surety that we shall inherit it ; hence the Apostle says (Eph. i, 13) : *You were signed with the Holy Spirit of promise who is the pledge of our inheritance* : for He is, as it were, a token of eternal life. The reason is that eternal life is due to a man, in as much as he is made a son of God : and this is effected through his becoming like unto Christ : and a man becomes like unto Christ through having the Spirit of Christ, and this is the Holy Ghost : *For you have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons whereby we cry : Abba (Father). For the Spirit himself giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God* (Rom. viii, 15, 16). *And because you are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts crying : Abba, Father* (Gal. iv. 6).

(e) He counsels us when we are in doubt, and teaches us what is God's will : *He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches* (Apoc. ii, 17). *That I may hear him as a master* (Isa. l, 4).

NINTH ARTICLE

I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH

As in one man there is one soul and one body, yet many members withal : even so the Catholic Church is one body, having many members. The soul that quickens this body is the

Holy Ghost : and therefore after confessing our belief in the Holy Ghost, we are bid to believe in the Holy Catholic Church : hence the Creed continues—*The Holy Catholic Church*.

Here be it observed that the word *Ecclesia* (Church) signifies assembly : wherefore the Holy Church signifies the assembly of the faithful, and the individual Christian is as a member of the Church, of which it is said (Ecclus. li, 31) : *Draw near to me, ye unlearned, and gather yourselves together into the house of discipline*. This Holy Church has four conditions in that she is one, holy, catholic, i.e. universal, and strong, i.e. firmly established.

(1) With regard to the first, it must be noted that although various heretics have formed themselves into various sects, they do not belong to the Church, since they are so many divisions, whereas the Church is one : *One is my dove : my perfect one is but one* (Cant. vi, 8). The unity of the Church arises from three sources.—Firstly, from the unity of faith, in as much as all Christians who belong to the body of the Church have the same belief : *I beseech you . . . that you all speak the same thing : and that there be no schisms among you* (1 Cor. i, 10). *One God, one faith, one baptism* (Eph. iv, 10).—Secondly, from the unity of hope, since all are confirmed in the hope of obtaining eternal life : wherefore the Apostle says (Eph. iv, 4) : *One body, and one Spirit : as you are called in one hope of your calling*.—Thirdly, from the unity of charity, in as much as all are united in loving God, and bound to one another in mutual love : *The glory which thou hast given me, I have given to them : that they may be one as we also are one* (John xvii, 22). If this love is true it is evinced in the mutual solicitude and sympathy of the members : *That we may in all things grow up in him who is the head, even Christ : from whom the whole body being compacted and fitly joined together, by what every joint supplieth, according to the operation in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in charity* (Eph. iv, 15, 16), because each one ought to be of service to his neighbour by making use of the grace that God has bestowed upon him. Therefore no man should think it of small account or allow himself to be cut off and expelled from this Church : for there is but one Church wherein men find salvation, even as outside the Ark of Noe it was not possible for anyone to be saved.

(2) With regard to the second, be it observed that there is also another assembly, that of the wicked : *I have hated the assembly of the malignant* (Ps. xxv, 5). But this is an evil assembly, whereas Christ's Church is holy : *The temple of God is holy, which ye are* (1 Cor. iii, 17) ; hence the words, *The holy . . . Church*. In this Church the faithful are sanctified by four things.

(a) In the first place, just as when a church is consecrated, it is cleansed materially, even so the faithful are washed with the blood of Christ : *He hath loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood* (Apoc. i, 5). *Jesus, that he might sanctify the people by his own blood, suffered outside the gate* (Heb. xiii, 12).

(b) Secondly, they are sanctified by being anointed because, just as a church is anointed, so also are the faithful anointed with a spiritual unction unto sanctification ; otherwise they would not be Christians, since Christ is the same as Anointed. This unction is the grace of the Holy Ghost : *God who hath anointed us* (2 Cor. ii, 21). *Ye are sanctified . . . in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ* (1 Cor. vi, 11).

(c) Thirdly, by the indwelling Trinity, since wheresoever God dwells, that place is holy : *Verily, this place is holy* (Gen. xxviii, 16). *Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord* (Ps. xcii, 5).

(d) Fourthly, because God is invoked over them : *But thou, O Lord, art among us, and thy name hath been called upon us* (Jer. xiv, 9).

We must, therefore, beware, seeing that we are thus sanctified, lest by sin we defile our soul which is God's temple : *If any man violate the temple of God, him shall God destroy* (1 Cor. iii, 17).

(3) With regard to the third, we must observe that the Church is catholic or universal—firstly, in point of place, in that it is spread throughout the whole world, contrary to the teaching of the Donatists : *Your faith is spoken of in the whole world* (Rom. i, 8). *Go ye into the whole world and preach the gospel to every creature* (Mark xvi, 15). Formerly, God was known only in Judea, whereas now He is known throughout the whole world. In this sense the Church has three parts : one is on earth, another in Heaven, the third is in Purgatory.—Secondly, the Church is universal as regards the different conditions of humanity, in as much as no exceptions are

made, for it includes master and servant, male and female : *There is neither male nor female* (Gal. iii, 18).—Thirdly, it is universal in point of time. For there have been those who said that the Church was to last until a certain time ; but this is false, since this Church began from the time of Abel and will endure to the end of the world : *Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world* (Matt. xxviii, 20), and after the end of the world it will continue in Heaven.

(4) The fourth condition is that the Church is firmly established. A house is said to be firmly established when (a) it has good foundations. Now the Church's chief foundation is Christ : *Other foundation no man can lay but that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus* (1 Cor. iii, 11). The Apostles and their doctrine are the Church's secondary foundation, whence she derives her stability which is described (Apoc. xxi, 14) where it is said that the city had *twelve foundations, wherein were inscribed the names of the twelve apostles*. Hence the Church is called Apostolic. Moreover, it was to indicate the stability of the Church that the Blessed Peter is called the *head*.

(b) Secondly, a house is proved to be firmly built if, however much it be shaken, it remains standing ; and the Church has ever proved indestructible. Her persecutors have failed to destroy her ; in fact, it was during times of persecution that the Church grew more and more ; the persecutors themselves, and those whom the Church would destroy, these it was who came to naught : *Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken ; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind to powder* (Matt. xxi, 44).—Again, errors have assailed her ; in fact, the greater the number of errors that have arisen, the more has the truth been made manifest : *Men corrupt in mind, reprobate in faith : but they shall proceed no further* (2 Tim. iii, 8).—Nor has the Church failed before the assaults of demons : for she is like a tower of refuge to all who fight against the devil : *The name of the Lord is a strong tower* (Prov. xviii, 10). Hence the devil does his utmost to destroy the Church : but he prevails not, for our Lord said (Matt. xvi, 18) that *the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*, as though to say : ' They will war against thee, but they shall not overcome thee.' The result is that alone the Church of Peter (to whom it befel to evangelize Italy when the disciples were sent to preach)

was always strong in faith ; and whereas outside that Church there is either no faith at all, or it is mingled with many errors, nevertheless the Church of Peter flourishes in faith and is immune from error. Nor need we wonder at this, since the Lord said to Peter (Luke xxii, 32) : *I have prayed for thee, Peter, that thy faith may not fail.*

TENTH ARTICLE

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS, THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

Just as in a physical body the operation of one member conduces to the good of the whole body, so is it in a spiritual body such as the Church. And since all the faithful are one body, the good of one member is communicated to another : *every one*, as the Apostle says (Rom. xii, 5), *members, one of another*. Wherefore among the points of faith handed down by the Apostles, is that there is a community of goods in the Church, and this is expressed in the words *Communion of saints*. Now of all the members of the Church Christ is the principal, for He is the head : *He . . . hath made him head over all the Church which is his body* (Eph. i, 22). Accordingly Christ's good is communicated to all Christians, even as the power in the head is shared by all the members.

This communication is effected by the sacraments of the Church, wherein the power of Christ's Passion operates, the effect of which is the bestowal of grace unto the remission of sins. These sacraments of the Church are seven in number. The first is *Baptism*, which is a spiritual regeneration : for just as a man cannot live in the flesh unless he is born in the flesh, even so a man cannot have the spiritual life of grace unless he be born again spiritually. This regeneration is effected by Baptism : *Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost he cannot enter into the kingdom of God* (John iii, 5). And it should be remarked that as a man can be born but once, so is he baptized but once. For this reason the holy Fathers¹ added the words : *I confess one Baptism*. The power of Baptism consists in cleansing a man from all his sins as regards both stain and punishment ; for which reason no penance is enjoined to those who receive Baptism, no matter how great sinners they

¹ At the Council of Nicea.

may have been. And if they were to die immediately after Baptism, they would rise at once to eternal life. Another result is that although none but a priest may baptize *ex officio*, in cases of necessity anyone may baptize, provided he observe the form of Baptism which is : *I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost*. This sacrament derives its efficacy from Christ's Passion : *All we who are baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized in his death* (Rom. vi, 3). For this reason it is that as Christ was three days in the tomb, so Baptism is conferred by a triple immersion.¹—The second sacrament is that of *Confirmation*. For just as those who are born in the body need to be fortified in order that the body become operative, even so those who are reborn in the spirit need to be fortified by the Holy Ghost. Hence the Apostles, in order that they might become strong, received the Holy Ghost after Christ's ascension : *Stay you in the city till you be endued with power from on high* (Luke xxiv, 49). This power is conferred in the sacrament of Confirmation ; and, therefore, those who have charge of children ought to be most careful to see that they be confirmed, because great grace is bestowed in Confirmation : besides, one who is confirmed receives, when he dies, greater glory than one who has not been confirmed, because he has received more grace.—The third sacrament is the *Eucharist*. As in the life of the body, after a man is born and become strong, he requires food that his life may be preserved and sustained ; so also in the spiritual life, after being fortified, he requires spiritual food, which is Christ's body : *Unless you shall eat of the flesh of the Son of man, and drink of his blood, you shall not have life in you* (John vi, 54). For this reason the Church has ordained that every Christian once a year must receive the body of Christ ; worthily, however, and with a clear conscience : since *he that eateth and drinketh unworthily*, i.e. being conscious of mortal sin which he has not confessed or from which he does not purpose to abstain, *eateth and drinketh judgement to himself* (1 Cor. xi, 29).—The fourth sacrament is *Penance*. In the life of the body a man is sometimes sick, and unless he take medicine, he will die : even so in the spiritual life a man is

¹ Baptism by immersion was still in vogue at the time of St. Thomas ; the triple immersion was replaced by the present rite in which the water is poured three times.

sick on account of sin ; wherefore he needs medicine that he may be restored to health ; and this grace is bestowed in the sacrament of Penance : *Who forgiveth all thy iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases* (Ps. cii, 3). Three conditions are necessary for Penance : contrition, which is sorrow for sin, together with a purpose of amendment ; confession of sins without any omission ; and satisfaction by means of good works.—The fifth sacrament is *Extreme Unction*. In this life man encounters many obstacles which prevent him from being perfectly cleansed from his sins. And since none can enter eternal life unless he be entirely cleansed from sin, another sacrament was needed whereby a man is cleansed from sin, delivered from his weakness, and prepared to enter the heavenly kingdom, and this is the sacrament of *Extreme Unction*. That this sacrament does not always restore the health of the body is because it may be that a man's life is not expedient for the salvation of his soul : *Is any man sick among you ? let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him in the name of the Lord : and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man : and the Lord shall raise him up : and if he be in sins they shall be forgiven him* (Jas. v, 14, 15). Accordingly it is clear how by the five foregoing sacraments a man obtains perfection in the spiritual life. Since, however, these same sacraments need to be conferred by certain definite ministers, hence arose the necessity of the sacrament of *Orders* by means of which the above sacraments are dispensed. Nor need we consider the ministers' manner of life, if at times they fall into evil ways : the point to consider is the power of Christ, which gives efficacy to the sacraments whereof they are the dispensers : *Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God* (1 Cor. iv, 1). This then is the sixth sacrament, namely, *Orders*.—The seventh sacrament is *Matrimony*, wherein if men lead a pure life they are saved, since thereby they are enabled to live without mortal sin. Sometimes married people fall into venial sins, provided their concupiscence does not lead them to act against the blessings of matrimony : whereas if they go beyond this they fall into mortal sin.

By these seven sacraments we receive the remission of sins : wherefore there follows immediately, *The forgiveness of*

sins, thus expressing our belief that the Apostles received the power to forgive sins : wherefore we must believe that the ministers of the Church, who derive this power from the Apostles, who received it from Christ, have power in the Church to bind and to loose, and that there is in the Church full power to forgive sins : which power, however, is possessed in various degrees, descending from the Pope to other prelates.

It must be observed also that not only is the efficacy of Christ's Passion communicated to us, but also the merits of His life ; and besides this all the good deeds of holy men are communicated to those who are in a state of grace, because all are one : *I am a partaker with all them that fear thee* (Ps. cxviii, 63). Hence it is that a man who lives in the state of grace is a partaker of all the good that is done in the whole world ; but in a special way those for whom specially a good deed is done : since one man can satisfy for another, as instanced in those benefits to which many societies admit certain persons.

Through this communion, then, we derive a twofold benefit. One is that Christ's merit is communicated to all ; the other is that one man's good is communicated to another : wherefore those who are excommunicated, by the very fact that they are outside the Church, forfeit a share in all the good that is done : which is a greater loss than the loss of any temporal good. They incur besides another risk : for it is clear that by this mutual assistance the devil is balked in his temptations ; so that when a man is deprived of these aids, the devil overcomes him with ease. For this reason in the early Church, when a person was excommunicated, it was not uncommon for him to experience in his body the assaults of the devil.

ELEVENTH ARTICLE

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY

Not only does the Holy Ghost sanctify the Church as regards our souls, but also it is by His power that our bodies will rise again : *Who raised up Jesus Christ our Lord from the dead* (Rom. iv, 24). *For by a man came death, and by a man the*

resurrection of the dead (1 Cor. xv, 21). Hence we believe, according to our faith, that there will be a resurrection of the dead.

Here four points arise for our consideration. (1) The first is the profit we are to derive from our faith in the resurrection : (2) the second is the condition of those who will rise again, as regards all in general : (3) the third is their condition as regards the good : (4) the fourth is their condition as regards the wicked.

(1) As regards the first point, it is well to observe that faith and hope in the resurrection are profitable to us in four ways : (a) By removing the sadness occasioned by the death of others, since it is impossible for a man not to grieve at the death of one who is dear to him, but in as much as he hopes that he will rise again, his sorrow for his death is much alleviated : *We will not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are asleep, that you be not sorrowful, even as others who have no hope* (1 Thess. iv, 12).

(b) By removing the fear of death, because if man had no hope of another and a better life after death, without doubt death would be very dreadful, and man would be guilty of any wicked deed rather than taste death. But since we believe that there is another and a better life to which we shall come after death, it is evident that none should fear death or do anything wrong through fear of death : *That through death he might destroy him who had the empire of death, that is to say, the devil : and might deliver them who through the fear of death were all their lifetime subject to servitude* (Heb. ii, 14, 15).

(c) By making us bethink ourselves of and apply ourselves to the performance of good works. For if man could look forward to no other life beyond this present life, he would have no great motive to do good works, since whatever he did would count for little, seeing that his desire is not confined to any particular good at any particular time, but looks to eternity. But because we believe that in return for what we do now we shall receive eternal goods at the resurrection, therefore do we apply ourselves to doing good : *If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable* (1 Cor. xv, 19).

(d) By drawing us away from evil. For just as the hope of a reward is a motive for good works, so fear of punishment

which we believe to be reserved for the wicked is a motive for avoiding evil deeds : *And they that have done good things shall come forth unto the resurrection of life : but they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgement* (John v, 29).

(2) In connection with the second point it should be observed that four conditions will attach to all who will rise again.

(a) The first regards identity of body after resurrection : seeing that the same body that now is with its flesh and bones will rise again : although some maintained that this very body which is corruptible here below will not rise again ; which is contrary to the Apostle's statement (1 Cor. xv, 53), that *this corruptible must put on incorruption*, and because Holy Writ says that by God's power the same body will come back to life : *I shall be clothed again in my skin and in my flesh I shall see God* (Job xix, 26).

(b) The second condition regards the quality of the bodies in the resurrection, for they will be of a different quality from that which they have now. Thus both good and wicked will rise with incorruptible bodies, since the good will be for ever in glory, and the wicked in everlasting punishment : *this corruptible must put on incorruption : and this mortal must put on immortality* (1 Cor. xv, 53). And since the body will be incorruptible and immortal there will be no use for food or ventry : *In the resurrection they will neither marry nor be given in marriage, but will be as the angels in heaven* (Matt. xxii, 30). This is against the Jews and Mohammedans : *Nor shall he return any more into his house* (Job vii, 10).

(c) The third condition concerns the integrity of bodies in the resurrection, since all both good and wicked will arise with all that bodily integrity which appertains to the perfection of man : thus none will be blind or lame or suffering from any defect : *The dead shall rise again incorruptible* (1 Cor. xv, 52), i.e. impassible to the corruptions of the present life.

(d) The fourth condition regards age, in as much as all will rise again of a perfect age, namely that which corresponds to the age of thirty-two or thirty-three years. The reason for this is that those who have not reached that age are not of a perfect age, and the old have already passed this : so that young people and children will receive what they lack, and to the old will be restored what they have lost : *Until we*

all meet into the unity of faith . . . unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ (Eph. iv, 13).

(3) Regarding the third point, the good will have a special glory, because the saints will have glorified bodies, which will be endowed with four gifts.

(a) The first is clarity : *The just shall shine as the sun in their Father's kingdom* (Matt. xiii, 43).

(b) The second is impassibility : *It is sown in dishonour it shall rise in glory* (1 Cor. xv, 43). *God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and death shall be no more. Neither mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more ; for the former things are passed away* (Apoc. xxi, 4).

(c) The third is agility : *The just shall shine and shall run to and fro like sparks among the reeds* (Wisd. iii, 7).

(d) The fourth is subtilty : *It is sown a natural body : it shall rise a spiritual body* (1 Cor. xv, 44), not that it will be a spirit altogether, but because it will be wholly subject to the spirit.

(4) Concerning the fourth it must be observed that the state of the damned will be contrary to that of the blessed, since they will be in a state of eternal punishment, to which a fourfold evil condition attaches.

(a) Their bodies will be darksome : *Their countenances shall be as faces burnt* (Isa. xlii, 8).

(b) Their bodies will be passible, and yet never destroyed : for they will burn for ever in the fire, and will never be consumed : *Their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched* (Isa. lxvi, 24).

(c) Their bodies will be weighed down, for the soul will be as it were enchained therein : *To bind their kings with fetters and their nobles with manacles of iron* (Ps. cxlix, 8).

(d) Both body and soul will be, so to speak, carnal : *The beasts have rotted in their dung* (Joel i, 17).

TWELFTH ARTICLE

LIFE EVERLASTING. AMEN

It is becoming that the last article of faith in the Creed should give expression to that which is the end of all our desires, namely eternal life, in the words, *Life everlasting*.

Amen: an article which is contradicted by those who pretend that the soul perishes with the body. If this were true man would be of the same condition as the beasts. To those who hold this opinion we may apply the words of the Psalmist (Ps. xlviii, 21): *Man whereas he was in honour, understood it not; he hath been compared to senseless beasts, and made like to them.* Because the human soul is likened to God in point of immortality, whereas in point of sensuality he is like the beasts; so that when a man believes that his soul dies with his body, he abandons his likeness to God and becomes like a beast. Against these it is said (Wisd. ii, 22, 23): *They . . . hoped not for the wages of righteousness, nor esteemed the honour of holy souls. For God created man incorruptible, and to the image of his own likeness he made him.*

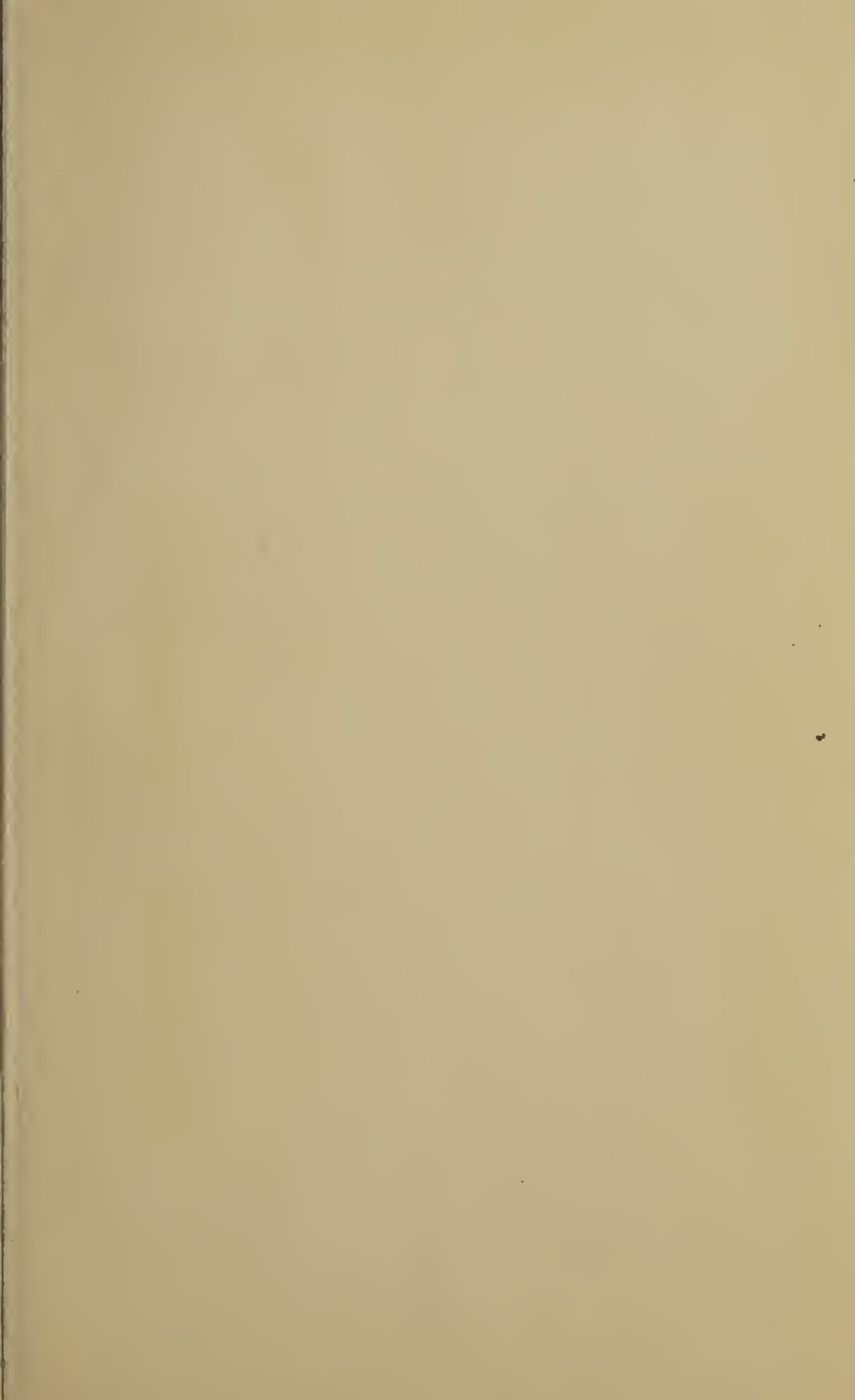
(1) In this article we must first consider what *eternal* life is, and in this connection the first thing to be noted is that in eternal life man is united to God: since God Himself is our reward and the end of all our labours: *I am thy protector and thy reward exceeding great* (Gen. xv, 1). This union with God consists (a) in seeing Him perfectly: *We see now through a glass in a dark manner, but then face to face* (1 Cor. xiii, 12). (b) It consists in perfect praise: *We shall behold, we shall love, and we shall praise*, as Augustine says (*De Civ. Dei*, xxii). *Joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of praise* (Isa. li, 3). (c) Eternal life is the perfect fulfilment of desire; in as much as each of the blessed will have more than he desired or hoped for. The reason for this is because in this life no man can fulfil his desires, nor can any creature satisfy a man's craving; for God alone satisfies and infinitely surpasses man's desire which for that reason is never at rest save in God: *Thou hast made us, O Lord, for thyself and our heart is restless until it rests in thee* (Augustine, *Conf.* i). And since in Heaven the Saints will possess God perfectly, it is evident that their desire will be satisfied and that their glory will surpass their expectation; hence our Lord said (Matt. xxv, 21): *Enter into the joy of the Lord*, which Augustine explains by saying: *Their whole joy will not enter into the joyful, but the joyful will enter into joy.—I shall be satisfied when thy glory shall appear* (Ps. xvi, 15). *Who filleth thy desire with good things* (Ps. cii, 5), because whatsoever is delightful will all be there superabundantly.—Thus if we desire

pleasure, there will be supreme and most perfect delight, in that its object will be God the sovereign good : *Then shalt thou abound in delights in the Almighty* (Job xxii, 26). *At thy right hand are delights even to the end* (Ps. xv, 11).—Again, if we desire honours, all honour will be there. The highest ambition of a man, if he be a layman, is to be a king ; and if he be a cleric, is to be a bishop, and both these honours are there : *Thou hast made us to our God a kingdom and priests* (Apoc. v, 10). *Behold how they are reckoned among the sons of God* (Wisd. v, 5).—Again, if we desire knowledge, there will be most perfect knowledge : because we shall know all natures of all things, and all truth, and whatsoever we wish, we shall know ; and we shall possess whatsoever we desire to possess, together with eternal life itself : *All good things came to me together with her* (Wisd. vii, 11). *To the righteous their desire shall be given* (Prov. x, 24). (d) It consists in perfect security. In this world there is no perfect security, since the more one has, and the higher one's position, the more reasons one has to fear, and the more one wants ; whereas in eternal life there is neither sorrow, nor toil, nor fear : *He shall enjoy abundance without fear of evils* (Prov. i, 33). (e) It consists in the pleasant companionship of all the blessed, a companionship that is replete with delight : since each one will possess all good things together with the blessed, for they will all love one another as themselves, and, therefore, will rejoice in the happiness of others' goods as their own, and consequently the joy and gladness of one will be as great as the joy of all : *The dwelling in thee is as it were of all rejoicing* (Ps. lxxxvi, 7).

(2) The saints in Heaven will have all these things and many more that surpass description. The wicked, on the other hand, who will be in everlasting death, will have no less sorrow and pain than the good will have of joy and glory. Their punishment is aggravated—(a) through their separation from God and from all good things : this is the pain of loss, which corresponds to aversion, and surpasses the pain of sense : *Cast out the unprofitable servant into exterior darkness* (Matt. xxv, 30). In this life the wicked have internal darkness, namely the darkness of sin, but then they will have exterior darkness besides.—(b) By the remorse of conscience : *I will reprove thee and set before thy face* (Ps. xlix, 21). *Groaning for*

anguish of spirit (Wisd. v, 3). Nevertheless their regret and anguish will be useless, for it will not be on account of the hatred of evil, but on account of grief for their punishment, —(c) By the intensity of the pain of sense, which is inflicted by the fires of hell, which will torture both soul and body : a most painful punishment according to the saints. For they will be as though always dying and never dead and never going to die. For this reason it is described as everlasting death, seeing that just as a dying man is in extreme pain, even so are they that are in hell : *They are laid in hell like sheep, death shall feed upon them* (Ps. xlviii, 15). (d) By their despair of salvation, for if it were given them to hope for deliverance from their torture, their punishment would be alleviated ; but since they have lost all hope, their pains are exceedingly aggravated : *Their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched* (Isa. lxvi, 24).

Thus we can realise the difference between doing good works and doing evil deeds : seeing that good works lead to life, while wicked deeds drag us to death. For this reason man should frequently call these things to mind, since thereby he is urged to good things and drawn away from evil. Thus significantly the Creed ends with these words : *Life everlasting*, that it may ever remain more and more impressed on the memory. To this life may we be brought by our Lord Jesus Christ who is God blessed for ever and ever. Amen.



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Thomas Agassiz, Jr.

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